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Bears, Bibles and a Boy

Memories of the Adirondacks

Jesse David Roberts

At the turn of the century, Jesse David Roberts was a small boy growing up at Brant Lake, New York, an isolated Adirondack community. The nearest general store was seven miles away, and to the north were fifty thousand acres of wilderness.

Jesse David was the third son of his father, a Bible reader and a noted Adirondack bear trapper who could set a trap to outwit the wariest bear. In *Bears, Bibles and a Boy*, Mr. Roberts tells of his father's lively experiences, and admits the fears of a small boy who was not quite sure that the bearskins in the woodshed would not come alive again. There is the story of Father's first encounter with a bear, when he was armed only with an ax; of the search for the elusive ghost bear; of old Yellow Tusk; and of Father's gallant dogs. Mr. Roberts tells also of Father's unswerving devotion to God; of his admiration for the mighty men of the Bible; and of the morning prayer and Bible-reading which no earthly business — not even the pursuit of marauding bears — could interrupt.

This is, as well, a book about a closely knit family living in a small frame house which yet managed, like Noah's Ark, to accommodate Father and Mother and nine children. Mr. Roberts recalls the chores of boyhood, the pleasures of fishing and the maple-sugar season, and the home remedies of herbs and barks. Most important of all, he recalls the guidance

(Continued on back flap)

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Bears, Bibles
and a Boy



illustrated by Gil Walker

NEW YORK

*Bears, Bibles
and a Boy*

MEMORIES OF THE ADIRONDACKS

by Jesse David Roberts

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*Bears, Bibles
and a Boy*

BEARS IN THE FAMILY

EARLY one morning in the spring of 1886, there was a loud knocking on the back door of our Adirondack home. A neighbor, in great excitement, explained that during the night bears had killed several of his sheep. The man had come to our house because Father made it a part of his business to keep black bears thinned down to a point where sheep-raising could be made profitable.

We lived near the head of Brant Lake and close to the northern boundary of Warren County, New York. Ours was a small valley, hemmed in by mountains and inhabited by a half-dozen families who made their living by farming, lumbering, and keeping a few cattle and sheep. To the north of us lay a wilderness from which bears frequently came forth for an easy living.

Urgent as our neighbor's appeal for help seemed to be, I recall that Father did not go to investigate the

slaughter of the sheep until, in unhurried manner, he had finished the morning devotion of Bible-reading and prayer. He knew that the marauders were by then digesting their food in the remote recesses of the forest, and felt that the most important business before the house was that of turning our hearts and minds toward God. If the chapter for the day was the one that lists the names of all the fathers who begat and all the children who were begotten from Adam to Moses, I am sure that it was carefully read through to the end. The prayer that followed the reading was likewise of no brief duration.

After completing the family worship, Father put a leash on our husky dog, Lion, and went off to find the tracks of the bears and the uneaten portions of the mangled sheep. A few days later I was afraid to venture into our woodshed, because two large black bears were hanging up out there. Being a small boy, I was not quite sure that the sheep-killing monsters would remain dead.

While the pursuit of these particular bears was a matter of routine for Father, some of the bears that were caught during the period from 1865 to 1895 provided lively experiences. To any hunter the successful tracking and killing of these big bears would seem great sport, and there is no doubt that Father enjoyed the challenge of a good hunt. However, to the people of our region bear hunting and trapping was part of the very serious business of survival. It was vital that the small flocks of sheep and cattle in our valley be protected, and Father knew this well.

Father came naturally to bear-trapping; you might

say that encounters with bears ran in the family. My Grandfather Roberts was one of old Vermont's famous trappers. Having acquired the hunter's zeal from his ancestors, he found exciting satisfaction in tracking bears and other wild animals to their lairs. He knew how to smoke bears out of their dens, and at times when they were slow in moving, he went in after them. On one occasion he even



got up from what people thought would be his deathbed to pursue a big bear.

It was unusual for a man as hardy as Grandfather was to take to his bed, but at this time he had good reason. Night and day for two weeks he had been caring for two elderly people who had been stricken with a malady known in those days as "black diphtheria." Because the disease was so feared, it had been impossible to find anyone to go to the aid of these unfortunate men. On hearing of their plight, Grandfather, who had never been afraid of anything except the wrath and scorn of his wife, had volunteered as nurse and attendant. Taking with him a

few home remedies consisting of oils and herbs, he had gone boldly to the quarantined house and offered his services.

All efforts to save the lives of the sufferers were in vain. The men's throats became so swollen that they could not take nourishment, and medicine did not give any relief. When the men died, Grandfather prepared their bodies for the undertaker, assisted in their burial, and started for home. On the way, he realized that he was not feeling well. Chills were causing him to tremble, his heart seemed to flutter at times, his throat was getting sore, and he felt dizzy. He thought that these symptoms were due to his lack of sleep and his exposure to the cold wind in the cemetery. As he turned down the last stretch of road which led to his gate, Grandmother, who was at the window, noticed his unsteady walk and went out to meet him. She helped him into the house and put him to bed.

Until long past midnight Grandmother tended her patient. She kept his feet warm with hot bricks, and administered potions of steeped herbs and barks. Finally, after thrashing about with alternate chills and burning fever, Grandfather dozed off from exhaustion. Grandmother also lay down to rest, but had hardly gone to sleep before she was awakened by an impatient pounding at the door. A man's voice shouted, "I've found the tracks of a big bear, and need your bear dog."

Grandfather had now been aroused from his slumber, and when he heard what the neighbor wanted, he called out, "Wait a minute, and I'll go with you." Suiting his actions to his words, he got up and began to put on his clothes. Grandmother rushed into the bedroom, but in

spite of her entreaties and the uncomplimentary words that she used to try and beat him down, Grandfather persisted in dressing.

In behalf of Grandmother, I should state that she was no weakling in the art of persuasion. Father often spoke about her great strength. He said that she could pick up a full barrel of cider and drink out of the bung hole. When an ugly ram came at her in a sheep pasture, she caught him by his horns, threw him to the ground, and pounded his head with a stone until he was ready to behave more like a gentleman. Disgusted with a braggart who called himself the champion of Ireland, she took him by his coat collar and the seat of his trousers and threw him over a six-rail fence, humiliating him to such an extent that he left town. It is an Indian saying that one should never disturb a bear in a berry patch, but when Grandmother found a bear eating blackberries in a patch where she intended to fill her pail, she drove the animal away and then picked the berries. Father claimed that she could take two ordinary men by their collars and bang their heads together. But Grandfather was no ordinary man, at least not when he was bent on a bear hunt. All that Grandmother could do, as he pulled on his cap and took his gun from the wall, was say, "If you are determined to be so stupid and stubborn, one of the boys should follow you, just as you do the bear, and bring your body home when you fall dead in your tracks."

Striving to overtake a bear was always such an absorbing venture for Grandfather that he forgot all other interests; and in this case, when he saw how large the tracks were, he seemed to tap a reservoir of reserve

strength that carried him forward so rapidly that his companion had considerable difficulty keeping up with him. Racing through the woods, descending into deep ravines, and circling mountains, they trailed the bear all day. When darkness overtook them, they made their way to a barn, crawled into the hay, and waited for the morning.

As the light of dawn enabled them to detect the bear's footprints, the two men pressed on. They knew that the bear was looking for winter quarters, and that he would soon find a place to his liking. By keeping old dog Ring on a leash and having him smell out the trail in the places where there was no snow, their progress was rapid. The freshness of the over-sized tracks, moreover, indicated that their quarry could not be far ahead. In the middle of the afternoon of that second day, as they made their way around an overhanging cliff, they came upon the rocky cavity for which they were looking. The excitement of the hunters was intense. Having located their game, the next step was to build a fire and smoke the bear out; if this method worked they both could fire at the bear as his head came into view. In case this strategy did not produce the desired results, Grandfather would light a torch, crawl into the den, and drive the occupant out. The second way would be a last resort, for one man with only one bullet to fire would give the bear a better chance to escape.

However, the smoke proved effective. The direction of the wind, or a draft under the rocks, carried the smoke far into the hidden recesses of the cave, and the bear had to come out for air. As the men saw the outline of his huge head they took quick aim and fired. Both bullets found their mark, and the men had a four-hundred-pound

bear on their hands in a place far from their homes. Fortunately, however, they had not dragged the bear very far when they came to the cabin of a wood chopper. In return for some bear steak, the woodsman gladly hitched up his horses and took the hunters and their kill back to Grandfather's house.

It was after dark when Grandmother heard the voices of the men out in the yard. She rushed out to see if someone had brought her sick husband to her, and she could hardly believe her eyes as she saw him carrying one end of the bear, while two men carried the other end. Mixing rebuke with affection, she exclaimed, "You dear old bear-crazy fool, if you ever seem to be dead, I won't call the undertaker until someone first pounds on our door and shouts, 'Bears!' Then if you don't wake up and grab your gun, I'll order a coffin."

When Grandfather had finished carving out some large chunks of bear steak for the woodcutter and had returned to the kitchen to wash his hands, he turned to Grandmother and remarked philosophically, "Hannah, more people die in bed than dies out of 'em. Diseases and undertakers have a hard time overtaking a man when he's on the trail of a bear; but I'm half-starved right now, and your pork-and-beans smell mighty good."

Grandfather, having outdistanced the dread disease which had invaded the community, continued his exciting life as a hunter and trapper. When, because of the accidental discharge of a gun, he lost a leg, he hewed out a wooden one and kept on chasing bears.

Over in the Green Mountains, Father's two uncles,

Solomon and Ichabod, also wise in the ways of bears, once had an unexpected encounter. It happened when they were on a mountain, gathering balsam pitch. Ichabod had an ailment which was then known as lingering consumption, and the sticky liquid from balsam blisters was mixed with powdered alum and honey to form a cough syrup for him. The uncles had taken their dog Major with them,



and, hearing him barking furiously, found him greatly agitated at the mouth of a cave on the mountainside. Thinking that raccoon might be denning there, Uncle Solomon suggested trying to get one or more of them for Thanksgiving dinner. He volunteered to crawl into the opening, while his brother was to remain on guard to shoot the animals if they attempted to escape. Both men were armed with ancient flintlock shotguns which were loaded for partridge and other small game.

Proceeding cautiously into the deepening gloom, Uncle Solomon was startled to see two eyes which apparently belonged to some huge animal. He leveled his gun and pulled the trigger. There was a deafening roar and a sudden collision which temporarily stunned both Uncle Solomon and Major, who had been following him. The occupant of the sleeping quarters was making for the exit fullspeed. Uncle Ichabod, hearing the noise, was stooping down to peer into the gloomy cavern when a large, rapidly moving, out-coming animal knocked him sprawling.

When Uncle Solomon came out of the den, he was alarmed to find his brother in the embrace of a huge bear. Seizing Uncle Ichabod's gun from the ground, he aimed to shoot the beast through the head, but the flint, wet with snow, failed to give the necessary spark. Taking the gun by the barrel and using it as a club, he struck the bear with such force that the breech of the gun was smashed; however, the blow did little damage to the bear. In desperation, fearing that the commotion and pressure might cause his brother to have another hemorrhage, Uncle Sol grabbed the bear by the ears and endeavored to pull him away from his victim. At this point, good old Major, emerging from the den and sensing the predicament of his masters, attacked the bear. The bear released the man he had been hugging and grappled with his new antagonist.

Fortunately, except for being quite out of breath, Uncle Ichabod had suffered no harm. The bear had neither mauled him with his powerful jaws nor ripped him with his claws. Both men were, therefore, able to go to the rescue of their dog. The bear, not wishing to risk a fight

against three, decided to retreat. But Major was not finished. Catching up with the bear and biting him in the hinder parts, he caused him to turn about.

At this point, so the story goes, the thought occurred to one of the uncles that they might be able to drive the



bear down the mountain. Providing themselves with long, pointed sticks, somewhat like spears, they prodded the bear in the direction in which they wanted him to go. They were making considerable progress in the art of bear-driving when, as they came to a spring of water, the bear wallowed in, lay down, and refused to move.

Realizing that two men and a dog could not induce

Mr. Bruin to leave his refreshing bath, Uncle Solomon decided to go after help. He made his way to the district schoolhouse, rushed in as if on most urgent business, and requested assistance. He explained that his brother was in danger of being killed by a big bear. The teacher thereupon dismissed the older boys who, following the suggestion of Uncle Solomon, ran to their homes for guns and ropes.

When the recruited force got back to the spring and found the bear still soaking himself in the water and mud, they fashioned their ropes into slip nooses, attached them to the ends of stout poles, and proceeded to prod and pull the reluctant animal down the slope of the mountain. It seemed that the men and boys were to have the distinction of escorting a wild bear about the neighborhood, but such humiliation was more than bruin could bear. He moved along with them until they reached an open field, but here he balked, and displayed an unconquerable spirit of passive resistance. When it finally became clear that all the king's oxen and all the king's men could not get the bear going again, a well-aimed bullet, fired at close range, brought to an end the day's excitement.

Many years later, when Father had finished telling the above story to an aged Vermonter, the man replied, "I was one of the boys who helped to get that bear down the mountain." As is so often the case with stories that have been passed on by word of mouth, variations are bound to occur. According to one version, Uncle Ichabod, having become exhausted by his strenuous exertion, rode

the bear part of the way down from the spring to the clearing.

Father's own first encounter with a bear occurred under somewhat different conditions. He had not gone hunting on that particular day, but, with ax in hand, was looking for an ash tree with just the right crook in it to serve as a runner for a sled. Suddenly, as he scrutinized various trees along his path, his attention was drawn toward a large dark form behind some bushes a few rods away. Before Father could climb a tree and seek safety, an angry she-bear was coming toward him at a rush.

Father had heard from experienced guides and hunters that under such circumstances the safest procedure for a man is to stand his ground. So he raised his ax to defend himself, and awaited the oncoming charge. The bear came straight toward the object of her wrath, and when it seemed as though one more leap would bring man and beast together, she stopped dead in a threatening crouch. As they looked each other in the eyes, Father dared not blink. He stared steadily at the bear and finally in this test of nerves the human eyes prevailed. The big bluffer turned and ran off just as rapidly as she had charged. Thus Father saved the seat of his trousers—or more—by standing firm.

THE LURE OF THE ADIRONDACKS

ACCORDING to the family record, Father was born in Danby, Vermont on January 6, 1831. This was during the administration of Andrew Jackson, and was the year that Abraham Lincoln went by boat down to New Orleans where he saw slavery in operation and began to hate it.

Father was a twin, and was given the name Edwin, while his brother was called Edward. His early life was spent in the beautiful valley of the Green Mountains, between Rutland and Bennington. Like the typical people of Vermont at that time, he attended school long enough to learn the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, although his love for hunting and fishing, together with the necessary work on the farm, seriously interfered with his education. One thing that he remembered from his frequently interrupted schooling was how to compute interest; and later on when his own children were in school,

he told them of his success in working out a very long problem in compound interest.

Perhaps his knowledge of how money could increase through interest helped to instill in him the habit of thrift, for, as Father assisted various neighboring farmers with their haying and wood chopping, he saved his earnings and deposited them in the Bennington Bank. Hence when the California gold rush occurred in 1849, he was not tempted—as others around him were—to disturb his steady habits. A bird in the hand, he thought, was worth two in the bush. In addition, he found plenty of adventure among his own mountains.

From the mountain peaks of Vermont, Father had often looked toward the north and northwest where the rugged, forest-covered Adirondacks extended as far as he could see. His observation, together with reports which he had heard, indicated that trapping, hunting, and fishing were much better up that way than in his own state. Moreover, at the age of twenty-eight he was not married, and was therefore free to go and come as he pleased. In the fall of 1859, he put his personal belongings into a pack basket, hung his powder horn at his side, shouldered his flintlock gun, and headed for the new country. Traveling by way of Fort Edward and Glens Falls, he proceeded north to the ruins of Fort William Henry near Lake George, where some of his ancestors had fought in earlier years. After a brief inspection of the old rifle pits, stone breastworks, and remains of the fortress, he hastened on to Warrensburg and then along the Schroon River to South Horicon, where he stopped for the night.

Having learned at a trading post that a lumber com-

pany at the head of Brant Lake was cutting off the primeval pine, spruce, and hemlock trees and selling quarter sections of the rough land for \$300.00, Father eagerly pushed on ten miles farther, where he bought the second farm beyond the head of the lake. This quiet valley, bordered on three sides by seven mountains in horseshoe shape, and opening at beautiful Brant Lake, was the land of his dreams. His one hundred and sixty acres of woodland contained scores of old and young sugar maples, a trout stream, a waterfall, and a never-failing spring of pure water. Here he could build his cabin and enjoy the peace and riches of the wilderness.

A half-mile up the trail James Leach, who was operating a logging job, lived with his family. It seemed natural that Father, in order to add to his income from trapping and to have a place to live while building his own house, should take a job with Mr. Leach.

Until this time Father had never seriously considered the advantages of married life. He had not held with Socrates that, whether a man marries or remains a bachelor, he will live to regret it. He had obviously not met the right young lady. But when he became acquainted with Ann Eliza, the oldest of the Leach girls, and saw how helpful she was to her mother and how kind and patient she was with her younger brothers and sisters, he began to understand how much richer life could be if he had a wife like her. He even confided to Ann Eliza that her tender and tasty baking reminded him of his mother's bread and cakes.

There was no hasty courtship and marriage, for Ann Eliza was then only fifteen, but it generally became clear

that wooing, as well as lumbering, was going on in that camp. When Father came in from the hills with his knapsack bulging with partridges and other wild game, his pockets also contained wintergreen berries and clear nuggets of spruce gum which he gave to the favored one for such sharing as she saw fit. He was thoughtful, too, in bringing wood to fill the box by the stove. For her part, she took pains to repeat bits of conversation which his defective hearing had missed (Father's hearing had been severely impaired in his childhood by scarlet fever), and she mended his clothes and darned his socks.

When Ann Eliza Leach reached the age of eighteen and Edwin Roberts was thirty-two, they were married on May 10, 1863. They took a brief wedding trip by horse and buggy to visit the groom's relatives in Vermont, where the charming bride was received as a most worthy member of the family.

Returning from their honeymoon, and wishing to impress his bride with the importance of cooperation, the young husband threw one end of a rope over the roof of their house and instructed her to go around and pull the rope to the ground. Since they both pulled in opposite directions, nothing was accomplished. Calling a halt, Father made his way to his young wife's side, and showed her how easy it was for them to get the rope by pulling together.

"What a good illustration!" she said. "And it will be just perfect if you always come around to pull on my side, as you now did."

Soon the young couple had to face a problem more serious than learning cooperation. The Civil War had

been going on for two years, and many people were so dissatisfied with its conduct that Draft Riots had occurred in New York City. Forgetting that in time of war it is necessary to sacrifice some things in order to avoid the loss of other more important things, they claimed that the



draft was interfering with their liberty. Finally, however, it became clear that Lincoln's call for men must be answered, and the men of New York State responded. Father went to the Draft Board for his examination, expecting that because of his deafness he would be rejected; but the examiners, having waxed very zealous, and anticipating that Father might mortgage his farm and raise the

\$300.00 required to engage a substitute, held him for the Draft.

It was not an easy task for Father to return home and break the news. Plans to enlarge and improve their small house had to be abandoned, while every effort had to be made to raise that \$300.00. There was on their farm some medium-sized pine and spruce which they intended to use for their own building needs. However, the young couple concluded that it would be better to sacrifice this lumber than to mortgage the farm. Even with this sale, and adding the few dollars they had in hand, they would not equal half their required payment to the government.

Fortunately, another source of income would be from trapping. The prices offered for some kinds of raw furs had doubled and tripled, since many of the men who had previously supplied the market were now in the Army. It was now the fall of the year, when pelts began to grow prime, and Father turned to his trapping. From the tracks he had seen along the brooks and around the lake, it was evident that mink were unusually plentiful. To escape the deeper snows of the north, or in quest of more abundant food, they had moved into this sunny valley. It seemed as if the game was seeking the trapper, for as Father tended his trap line he frequently found a catch in every trap. By the end of the trapping season, he had sold enough of the soft, silky pelts to meet his draft payment.

At the end of the Civil War, more people began to move into the Brant Lake region, making it a neighborhood of ten hardy families. Four families actually lived just outside the valley, but were considered part of the neighborhood. The honest-sounding names in themselves

reflected the pioneer spirit of America: Bolton (Thomas, Joe and Valentine), Arthur Smith, Steward Purvee, Albert Griffin, Thomas Bentley, Eleazor Davis, and Ross (Austin and Cassius).

As each family owned a quarter-section of land, the houses were situated approximately one-half mile apart. A tiny schoolhouse, conveniently located to care for the educational needs of the children, was built on a connecting crossroad near the lake. The nearest store was seven miles south at the outlet of the lake, while the area back of the surrounding mountains consisted of some fifty thousand acres of wilderness.

The four families on our rocky road, though not blessed with so much of the morning sunshine, were more prolific. As though controlled by a mystic rhyme, like "Thrice to mine, and thrice to thine, and thrice again to make up nine," there were nine children born in our tiny house, and nine in each of the next two houses up the road. The other settlers, perhaps considering the raising of a family a mere sideline, did not do so well.

FATHER THE BEAR TRAPPER

TO SUPPORT themselves on their farms, the families of the Brant Lake region would usually buy a cow, two or three sheep, a few hens, a pig, and a horse or yoke of oxen. As the land was gradually cleared for pastures and for producing hay, the herds and flocks would be increased. Corn, potatoes, and other vegetables were raised for one's own use, although an extra supply of potatoes was often grown for sale to those who might need to buy, especially to the "cottage people" who came in the summer. Whenever a farmer could produce more butter and eggs than his own family needed, these products were taken to market to be traded for other staples. The smaller families had the advantage in bartering, since they were more likely to have the surpluses. Wool from the sheep was sent to the mill for carding, and later spun into yarn on the family spinning wheel. The yarn was then dyed red or black, and wound into balls for knitting socks

and mittens for the family. The melted tallow from the sheep that were killed for food served for making candles. Gradually a flock of sheep would increase until the owner would have surplus wool to sell at shearing time in the spring of the year, and also some fatted male lambs in the



middle of the summer. Income from surpluses was often needed for paying taxes, buying clothing, flour, sugar, tea, and similar necessities. Mortgages on farms were frequently paid off from such sources of income. It is easy to understand, therefore, why it was disastrous when black bears began to prey on a man's sheep. If the bears were

not killed, they might destroy an entire flock of thirty or forty sheep in a few weeks.

To prevent such destruction and loss, as well as to earn the extra money that came with the bounty and the sale of the skin, Father pursued his trapping in our section of the Adirondacks. From 1863 to 1905 he caught one or more bears every year. Each spring, as soon as it was time for the bears to emerge from their dens, Father would take a day off from farm chores to look for bear tracks far back in the forest; and on his return home the first question that we asked was, "Did you see any signs?" We knew that he had examined old, decaying logs which bears tear apart for grubs and ants, and that he had observed whether or not the bulbs of the Jack-in-the-pulpits—or wild turnips, as we called them—had been dug up for food. These and other indications of the presence of bears were quickly noticed by his trained eyes.

If you have ever sampled the fiery-tasting food which wild turnips furnish, you do not begrudge it to bears. And yet bears, big and little, fill their empty stomachs with these tubers as soon as they come up in the spring. When I was old enough to go with Father to his traps he would sometimes pause to point out the wilted tops from which the bulbs had been eaten.

On one occasion I was greatly interested in the marks made by bears' teeth on a tree which leaned at a slight angle over a bears' runway. It appeared that all the members of the bear family had stood on their hind legs and measured their heights with teeth marks on the bark of the tree. There were marks made by the little bears, the medium-sized bears, and the big bears.

While the business of trapping animals seems so repulsive to us that various humane laws have been passed to minimize suffering, there is no need for sentimental extremes in the matter. The bears were predatory animals who killed the sheep without discrimination, often raiding the pastures when the ewes were heavy with their young, or killing the lambs cruelly and wastefully. It is not fair to ask, "How would you like to be caught in a trap." An unbalanced feeling of compassion for one animal temporarily in discomfort should not be allowed to result in greater distress to other animals on which it preys.

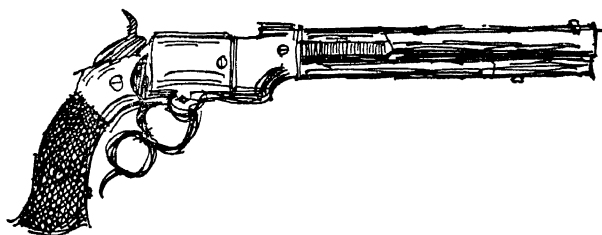
Both skill and patience were required to set a bear trap the way Father did it. Generally he selected a trail where the bear would walk through a mountain pass, or between a tree and a large rock, and where enough earth could be removed so that the jaws of the trap could be on a level with the ground. Since animals travel stealthily, wishing to make as little noise as possible, two brittle sticks were laid across the path in a natural manner, just far enough apart to cause a bear to step over one of them onto the pan of the trap. Another dry stick supported the pan, and would not bend downward or break until a heavy weight was put upon it. This assured a catch high enough on the animal's leg to hold, and also prevented the trap from being sprung by smaller game.

The entire space between the open jaws of the trap was filled in with moss and leaves. Usually Father also pushed ferns and Jack-in-the-pulpit plants into the earth around the trap in order to make the area look as natural as possible. Then, to deter human beings and deer from

going through that particular part of the trail, he bent small trees across the way at the right height. Care was taken to leave no human odor. Even though bears have such a keen sense of smell that they can detect and avoid a poorly set trap, Father knew how to outwit them.

Hunting bears with a gun would, on the surface, seem more humane than trapping them, but before modern repeating rifles were invented, killing bears with a gun was more difficult than some people might think. It took time to reload the old muskets; while you were engaged in this process, if your first shot had merely wounded the animal, you might be attacked and mutilated, or even killed. Or the injured beast might escape, and perhaps die a slow death.

When Father first began to trap bears he carried an old muzzle-loading gun, which was cumbersome and somewhat dangerous to handle. (His father had lost a leg as a result of the accidental discharge of just such a musket.) As soon as it was possible for Father to secure a more modern firearm, he bought a Smith and Wesson thirty-two caliber, fifteen-inch-barrel pistol for which he could secure loaded cartridges and which required only a few seconds for reloading.



While this new gun was rather light for shooting such huge animals as bears, it had its advantages. It had the accuracy and velocity of a rifle combined with the convenience of a pistol. If necessary, Father could use the gun with one hand. In addition, it could be put in a large, inside pocket of a coat, thus leaving one free to carry a fishpole, traps, and other duffle. When he did not find a bear in his traps, Father would line honeybees, look for ginseng, and fish for trout.

Father had the good vision and quick, steady hands that are so essential for accurate shooting. By observing the dried skulls of bears which he had shot, he learned the vulnerable places at which to aim, and could usually dispatch a bear with a single bullet.

Killing a bear in a trap was not always as simple as it is to tell about it. The chain of a bear trap was not fastened to any stationary object, but to some small, tough tree which had been cut down and stuck lightly into the ground near the trap. If available, Father preferred a short beech tree of from three to four inches in diameter at the butt end. This tree served as a clog or hindrance which would not hold too solidly and cause the chain to break when a bear began his first lunging efforts to escape from the trap, but which would restrain him enough to tire him gradually. Usually as the bear dragged the clog it would catch on a root or tree before he moved very far; but sometimes both trap and clog would be dragged so far that a careful search had to be made for the impeded animal.

While searching for a bear that had dragged a trap

away was always an exciting experience, it was even more exciting to find a bear unhitched, for then he might charge his pursuer. On one occasion Father came upon a large bear that had just got into his trap and was thrashing about so violently that it was impossible to stop him with a single shot. The bullet found its mark in the massive, bobbing black head, but the wound did not bring immediate death. Instead of falling to the ground, the bear made a mad rush at Father, who was reloading his gun and, incidentally, retreating to gain time. One more leap and the cruel jaws and powerful claws would have torn human flesh as they had previously torn helpless sheep; but reloading this new gun took only a fraction of the time that was formerly required to ram powder and ball down the barrel of the old muzzle-loader. Father turned, and with hands which never trembled leveled the pistol and fired. This time powder scorched the coarse fur right between the angry-looking eyes, and another bear had killed his last sheep.

I recall the first time that I accompanied Father to a trap that had a large bear in it. The pistol was handed to me for the execution. While both my older brothers were crack shots, I had never had much practice with a gun and my hands were so shaky that I continually missed. Father remarked that if I was going to waste ammunition, we might have to finish the bear off with a club. Such a person-to-bear encounter did not appeal to me, and I gladly returned the gun to the one who knew how to

handle it so much better than I did. With one bullet the big bear fell stone-dead. I must admit that I never again attempted to win the honor of becoming a great bear hunter.

THE POWER OF A BOOK

ALTHOUGH he had lived a good moral life before his marriage, Father had never paid much attention to religion. He had heard people argue about the Bible, and he knew that the various denominations had been formed because of differences in beliefs, but none of these things had particularly troubled him. So far as he could see, he was as good as most church members were. Two factors delivered him from his conceit. One was the beautiful girl whom he had married, and the other was the Bible. It is surely not good for man to live alone, if he can have the love and companionship of a virtuous woman. Father was fortunate in his marriage, for Mother was a most wholesome Christian. She read her Bible daily and lived it in her gentle, unpretentious way. One day when Father went to the store for supplies he purchased a small, inexpensive copy of the Bible for his own use. He had heard of a spirited young

evangelist named D. L. Moody who was preaching from the Bible to large audiences; and he knew that Abraham Lincoln had read the Bible, and had frequently quoted from it in his speeches. He decided, therefore, to examine the book for himself; and to be thorough about the matter, he began his readings at the very first chapter of Genesis.

Not having had many grades of schooling, Father was a slow reader. He had to pause to grasp the meaning of sentences, and often halted as he attempted to pronounce some of the Biblical names. Mother could read much better, but because of Father's poor hearing it was agreed that he should do the reading, so that they could enjoy the stories together. They began at the first chapter of the Old Testament, and from the verse, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth," they proceeded from chapter to chapter and book to book. They read one chapter immediately after breakfast and a second right after supper.

Since Father was unusually strong, and had wrestled with the boys in his youth, he was especially interested in the stories of mighty men, men who overcame great difficulties. He was spellbound by the account of Noah who built himself an ark and outrode the flood; of Abraham who, like himself, left the land of his fathers and dwelt in a new country; and of Jacob who, having fled from his angry brother, found romance and prosperity. The nocturnal wrestling match between Jacob and the mysterious stranger was read with rapt attention. The trick of getting a man on your hip and throwing him was well known, but how could Jacob, with a hip out of joint,

hold out until he gained his blessing? Surely, there was a man of steel.

Reading on through one fascinating story after another, and because of the way in which God related Himself to all the characters and events, it became increasingly clear to Father that the Bible was no ordinary history or volume of literature. Moses, though powerful enough to knock a cruel Egyptian into perpetual unconsciousness and put to flight a band of rude shepherds singlehanded, was utterly unable to deliver his people from bondage until after he had met God at the Burning Bush. And there was the spellbinding story of long-haired Samson, who killed a lion with his hands; and, armed with the jawbone of an ass, slaughtered a thousand Philistines but finally came to a tragic end because of a broken vow.

As the ways of God were expressed through the beautiful Psalms, the teaching of mighty prophets, and the matchless words of the Master, the seed found a place of growth in good soil. Father became an ardent lover of the Bible and of the God who inspired those who wrote it. One Sunday morning, while he was absorbed in reading the Sermon on the Mount, the room in which he was sitting was suddenly filled with a light more dazzling than that of the sun. The glow that penetrated that simple room with its cooking pots, water jugs, and traps hanging on the wall could not be explained, nor did it need to be. From that moment on, no urgency of work on the farm, and no call of the forest to go after bears was ever permitted to interfere with Father's systematic habit of reading from The Book and kneeling afterward in prayer. Day after day, and year after year, family worship was

held in our home, until eventually the Bible was read from cover to cover thirty-five times. Father became as noted for his knowledge of the Bible as he was for his skill in catching bears. Like Nimrod of old, "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord."

Father was known also for his integrity and stability. In these respects, some people thought that he carried his rules of righteousness too far. He would never draw hay into the barn on Sunday, even to keep it from getting wet, nor would he gather sap on that day, even though the buckets were running over. He preferred to read his Bible, or to walk long miles to some church, keeping the Lord's Day as he felt the commandment indicated he should. He found special pleasure in expounding the scriptures to people, and when he went to market he indulged in this joy so fervently with some of his friends and neighbors that he often returned home long after dark. At times Mother worried when she had his supper ready and he did not get back as soon as she thought he should. She would open the front door, and listen for the familiar rumble of the heavy cart wheels on the bridges down the road.

Some people who did not know the Bible very well, and held contrary ideas about its teachings, would get provoked at Father, claiming that he liked to argue. Actually, he merely wished to explain what the debatable subjects meant to him. In such circumstances it is natural for us to behave like the Quaker and his wife who were having a firm discussion about a difference of opinion. Turning from reason to abuse, he said: "Thou art stubborn." She replied: "Nay, nay, but *thou* art stubborn. I

am just strong-minded." It has been said that the only people who accomplish anything are those who are cocksure that they are right. To be fair, when we claim the right to think for ourselves, we should grant the same privilege to others who may think somewhat differently from us.

Father's inflexible habit of reading a full chapter from the Bible and following this with a substantial prayer of thanksgiving and supplication after breakfast, and again after supper, seemed at times too rigid; but it was probably better to keep first things first, rather than to become lax about them. Anyway, I never heard Mother complain because of the rest periods after meals, and none of us ever missed a train because of them.

Some people have the mistaken idea that when a person starts to become a Christian, his future life should be free from trouble and trial. On the contrary, when one takes a firm stand for truth and righteousness in any form he soon finds himself enlisted in warfare against strong and ruthless enemies. Victories can be won only through conflict; character achieved by overcoming obstacles and learning to be kind as well as brave. It is disastrous if one allows himself to become discouraged by mistakes, for mistakes can also teach valuable lessons. Early in his new life Father had a severe testing which came about from the fact that he was so strong for a man of his size.

It happened while he was working on a lumber job. Frequently, during the long winter months, the farmers at Brant Lake could earn many extra dollars by hitching up their teams and drawing logs from the rough country

north of us. Since Father had a strong yoke of oxen and a sturdy sled, he sometimes engaged in logging after the trapping season had ended. During the first winter that he did this work it soon became apparent to the other teamsters that Father must be unusually powerful to be able to load up and unload the heaviest logs so easily and quickly. The men talked about it, just as others in haying time had spoken of his large forksful of hay.

On the logging job there was a man by the name of Jack Turner, who was also noted for his strength, and he resented the praise that was going to the little man Roberts. Turner was a taller and heavier man, built like a halfback. Jack was known to drink a bit and when he drank he sometimes got in fights; and in every fight he was an easy winner. The more he heard about what Ed Roberts could do with logs, the more irked he became, and the more he longed for a chance to prove that he was still the local strong man. He was contemptuous of the serious young farmer with the black whiskers, and looked for an opportunity to put him in his place. Turner would block the road when he met Father, and refuse to turn out, even though his own sled was empty and Father had a heavy load of logs. And Father, who was a man of peace, would turn out in the deep snow to let him pass. A bully, of course, interprets such action as a sign of weakness, and continues his insulting behavior with greater boldness. The showdown came a few days later. Before telling about this, however, it might be well to explain just how Father came by his remarkable strength.

Back in Vermont, Father had lived a wholesome, clean life. While he held no particular scruples because of



religious convictions at this time, his observations had convinced him of the moral value of temperate behavior. He believed in the goodness of natural things, so that when other men drank liquor to relax after a hard day in the hay fields, Father drank milk. Instead of carrying a plug of tobacco, he carried a cake of maple sugar. In basic strength he took after his mother, whose extraordinary physical feats have been mentioned. I have heard Father say that he did not know what people meant when they spoke of being tired. He could mow and pitch hay all day, and still feel like Samson as he wrestled with his boyhood friends in the evening. Once, after he had helped a husky Irishman do his haying and was about to be paid for his labor, the man said, "Eddie, before paying a man what I owe him, I always lay his shoulders on the ground."

"All right," Father replied, and squared himself for the encounter. When the two men had finished wrestling, the farmer's wife chided, "I would be ashamed to let a man no bigger than a sheep throw me around like that."

At another time, when Father was attending a country fair, he was persuaded by his friends to try wrestling with Hi Jinks, who was said to be the champion wrestler of Vermont. Father was not eager to have a bout with a man who was giving exhibitions of the wrestling art, but his friends urged him on. Three times in succession Father pinned the shoulders of his opponent to the ground. Hi Jinks was so chagrined when he got up the third time that he struck at Father, but the blow was deftly turned aside, and Jinks himself got one that knocked him flat. Father later said that he must have struck instinctively in self-

defense, for that was the only time in his life that he ever hit a man with his fist.

When Father settled down to the serious work of clearing his land and providing for his family, he left the sport of wrestling to the younger generation. Only once did he resort to the fun that he had formerly enjoyed. This took place when a merchant who was expert in handling barrels of flour unexpectedly put his arms around Father from behind, as if to lift him, then pulled him down on his back and boasted, "Roberts, this is the way I down the boys." When my humiliated father regained his feet amid the laughing onlookers, he replied, "I'll show you how *I* do it." Catching the trader by the lapels of his coat, he gave him a quick yank forward, swung his feet completely over the counter, and brought his shoulders to the floor.

Father's build did not make him appear very formidable. He was only five-feet-seven-inches tall, and carried no superfluous flesh. His legs were round, small, and hard from climbing the mountain trails and working in the fields. His chest was solid and compact; his arms sinewy and long. Although he did not look it, his weight was close to one hundred and sixty pounds. It was no wonder that Jack Turner considered him an easy mark and itched to fight him. Turner heaped abuse after abuse upon him, and boasted to others that he would knock off Father's whiskers if he ever gave him the slightest provocation.

Things came to a head one night when Father came into the lumber shanty a little late for supper. The other men, having satisfied their appetites, had pushed back

their benches and begun smoking their pipes, talking and joking with each other. When Father had finished eating, he looked about for a place to sit. The only vacancy was next to the man who wanted to put him in his place. Father started for that seat but as he approached it, Turner sprawled out to block the way.

This was the last straw. Without comment Father caught Jack Turner by his coat collar and one leg, spun him around and sent him sprawling and rolling across the floor as though he were a cull log. Quietly Father asked: "Do you want some more?"

The challenge was not accepted. The men on the benches quickly moved aside until there was plenty of room for Father to sit down. After that the black-bearded, Bible-reading bear trapper was accorded due respect.

THIS IS THE WAY IT WAS

*I*N THE early days among the mountains the settlers found that the quickest and least expensive way to build a house was to make it out of logs, very much after the pattern of a lumber camp. The three houses up the road from our place were built that way; but Father, who knew some of the rudiments of carpentry, constructed his house on more modern lines. It was a frame house, with upright studding to which wide pine boards, called sheathing, were nailed. Since commercial insulation material was not available, the bark from white birch trees was tacked on the outer surface of the sheathing, and clapboards were nailed over all.

Following the birth of their first child, Alice May, in 1864, a new daughter arrived in the Roberts' home about every two years, until by January, 1875, there were five little girls—Alice, Anna, Antha, Cordelia, and Clara. They were taught to sit very still while the Bible was being

read, and to kneel on the hard floor for the prayer that followed. As they grew, they helped their mother churn the butter, dry the dishes, and wind into balls the yarn that she spun for their socks and mittens. It was a special joy to them when they could pet a new calf, or feed a little lamb. The girls became greatly interested in climbing the stairs to the attic whenever their father was skinning the many fur-bearers which he had caught. Once,



when Cordie saw him take a new-born baby into his arms, she asked, "Are you going to skin it?"

In the orchard the girls had a wee house for the tiny wrens who always found their way back from the south land after the long, cold winters. The five little girls must have made a pretty picture as, with red cheeks and dancing eyes, they ran about in perfect harmony with the sunshine, fresh air, and blossoming trees of their mountain farm.

Our type of house is now called Cape Cod, the up-

stairs of which is often finished off for dormitory purposes. Ours was never completed, but served for sleeping quarters just the same. Curtains were used, instead of more durable material, to give privacy, but, as in the lumber camps, there was always room for another mattress to accommodate company or an addition to the family. We had one bedroom downstairs and in the living room there was a double bed, under which was a trundle bed for the youngest member of the family.

A big chimney, made of rock from our fields and creek, dominated one end of the main living room. The huge fireplace was used for cooking and warmth, and also provided light and heat for the skinning and curing of pelts on cold winter nights. Later Father bought an iron, woodburning stove which made cooking much easier for Mother and my sisters.

Along one wall of the big room Father hung his assortment of traps and gear, always kept in good repair and among our most valued possessions. His guns were near the door, as well as the strong leash he sometimes used on the dogs when he went to track a bear. There were pegs for our knitted caps and mittens, and for the warm coats lined with our own sheepskin.

After 1875 there were four more additions to the Roberts household, three boys—John, Ruel, and myself—and baby sister Eliza. We three boys slept in the loft upstairs, which was reached by a crude, narrow stairway as steep as a ladder. We had little furniture, but we had deep mattresses of straw or cornhusk ticking, and we shared an assortment of gray homespun blankets which Mother made from the wool of our own sheep. In a cor-

ner of the second floor the furs, stretched on boards suitable for the various sizes of the pelts, were hung to dry with the flesh side out. The bear skins were tacked up on the inside of the barn.

Bathtubs were unknown to us, and the old galvanized washtub, filled with water heated on the back of the kitchen stove, had to serve for washing our clothes and those who wore them. Although some people in our area firmly believed that baths were a curse of the devil, our parents held with John Wesley that cleanliness was next



to godliness. As it was, our baths were apt to be hasty, rather dampening affairs, and like most children the world over, we never quarreled over who was to have priority for a bath.

Our house managed to shelter us all, and no one ever had to go to the barn to sleep on the hay. As Noah found room for all the animals in the ark, so our small house, twenty-four feet by twenty-two, stretched to accommodate eleven humans, with a place behind the stove for our faithful dog.

Our farm bore distinctive marks of an interesting past. On four flat sections along the brook were the re-

mains of beaver dams. With no knowledge of conservation, greedy trappers had exterminated all the beavers before Father had bought the property. Fortunately for all of us, the stream was full of large trout which it took only a few minutes to transfer from deep pools to the dinner table. No wonder that the Roberts boys became ardent and expert fishermen.

About a quarter of a mile up the road was a crystal-clear spring of cold water which never diminished in volume, but bubbled up summer and winter. Since our property had no underground piping, we children substituted as carriers to bring the water to the house. We had small shoulder yokes which Father had fashioned for us, and these made it easier to balance a load and carry two pails at a time. The spring was near our hayfield, and a gourd or tin dipper was usually handy when we came to quench our thirst. Father taught us all at an early age never to drink directly from a pool or stream, in case we might accidentally drink up some frog's eggs or other foreign matter. Neighbors also came to drink at our spring, and to fill their jugs with this splendid water.

A marvel which I never heard explained was the large number of giant maples which stood in our sugar grove. Many of these lordly trees were three feet in diameter, and, towering into the sky sixty feet and more, provided favorite observation points for hawks and eagles who knew that we kept tasty hens and chickens. One by one these trees, some of them pin or curly maple, so desired for furniture, grew old and died. We had hundreds of regular sugar maples from ten to eighteen inches

in diameter, but there was a missing link between these and the great, old trees.

For the rugged work on his farm, such as plowing among rocks and roots, driving through the deep snow to gather sap, and drawing in wood and hay, Father preferred oxen to horses. Yoking oxen to a sled or cart was less complicated, and the equipment much more economical to make and maintain. A farmer could build a sled, and nearly all of a cart, out of timber from his own trees. With oxen he could drive his team without reins.

To turn a well-trained yoke of oxen to the right, the word "gee" was the signal, while "haw" meant a left turn. "Whoa" was used to bring oxen to a stop, just as it is for horses. One man up our way even tried this order on his new Model T Ford when it headed down a bank, but in this case the magic word failed.

Strangely enough, the sound "hush," which we make to silence noisy children, was Father's way of accelerating the speed of his oxen. At the Pottersville Fair, when he was persuaded to enter the ox race, Father took his place between his oxen, grasped the metal ring in the yoke, and said, "hush." His faithful beasts must have understood that they were to run like the wind, for they came in to win first prize.

On stormy days, Father found plenty of work to do inside the house. He resoled our boots and shoes, and made moccasins out of sheep skins which he had had tanned. For his three sons and himself, he made sheepskin mittens, with the wool on the outside. It was natural for us to think of these as boxing gloves, and we used

them for sparring among ourselves as well as for keeping our hands warm. In zero weather Father would put on home-knitted socks, his handmade moccasins, and then low rubber boots. He made his short overcoats from bearskins and sometimes wore a coonskin cap. This made for a picturesque and formidable outfit, but it was effective against the penetrating winter blasts that seemed to come direct to us from the North Pole.

Mother spun the yarn on her large wheel, and knitted all our socks and mittens until my sisters were old enough to learn how to help. Cloth for making our clothing was bought at the general store in Horicon. The first ready-made suit that I had was provided by my sisters when I started away to school in my teens. Otherwise, I was very much like the young Billy Sunday who, when told that he could report for work as soon as he went home and got his clothes, replied, "I've got 'em on!"

The food at our house, as in other mountain communities, consisted of plain essentials—bread, potatoes, johnnycake, pork, eggs, fish and game. Because of Father's skill and also the fact that my brothers were such good shots, we consumed more fish and game than neighboring families. Our sausage, made with sage which Mother grew in our backyard, was exceptionally tasty, and so were the hams which we smoked with hickory and corn-cobs.

In addition to the everyday foods, we ate cabbage, carrots, turnips and squash, which would keep indefinitely through the winter months in our cold-cellar. For dessert we enjoyed pumpkin, apple, rhubarb and berry pies, and the superb wild-strawberry shortcakes in season.

These were spread over with the berries, cream and grated maple sugar. Sandwiches also had the grated sugar between two thick slices of homemade bread. Brown sugar is well known as a sweetening, but grated maple sugar is in a class by itself, and not so well known. We did not have oatmeal and similar cereals in my young days, but breakfast often included pancakes with maple syrup and honey, and at times we were like the boy who said that he kept eating pancakes until he felt a pain—then ate one more to make sure. This plain, country fare must have been healthful, for all the farmers who lived in our valley reached the age of fourscore years, and not one of them ever had an operation.

Incidentally, I did not have my first taste of ice cream until I went off to school at the Glens Falls Academy. Not storing ice, and with no freezer, we never made ice cream at the farm. And I never saw a locomotive until I was almost grown, although from a distance of eighteen miles we could hear the train whistle when the wind was right. We were back-country people and seldom got farther away from home than the general store at the place now known as Brant Lake, seven miles from our house.

THE GHOST OF THE FOREST

AS THERE have been haunted houses, so there have been haunted hills and woodlands. Even our own house was at times a place of strange noises. By rapping on the walls, spooky squeaking and scratching could be produced. We knew that sometimes bats found shelter behind the boards and would emerge at night to keep the mosquito population down to a minimum. Back among the mountains, however, there once lived an unusual creature who was entitled to serious consideration. From time to time on dark nights, and occasionally in the pale moonlight, the mysterious object became visible to human eyes. It even walked upright like a human being.

One farmer, awakened by the furious barking of his dog, claimed that he saw among his frightened flock a white form several times larger than any of his sheep. When he took his gun and dog to investigate, the nocturnal apparition vanished into the shadows of the forest.

Another neighbor, on hearing a commotion in his pasture, declared that in the fading twilight he beheld a tall, white-robed man walking away, carrying a sheep in his arms. Other men from neighboring farms had similar stories to tell. The rumor grew that some gigantic man, wrapped in a sheet, was stealing from the flocks.

Father had been called on for help, but all he had been able to find were the tracks of an exceptionally large bear and the fragments of partially devoured sheep. The fact was that Father had had unusually poor luck with his trapping that spring. Frequently he had found his traps sprung or turned upside down, as if someone were playing pranks on him. He wondered who could be following him around in the deep recesses of the swamps and woods. Finally the bear-trapping season for that year had been terminated by the warm weather of July, when pelts were no longer prime. Even though the bears would have thick, shiny coats again in the late fall, it was not considered wise to trap them then, when hunters would be wandering through the forest looking for other game. However, in the early winter, when fresh snows would again reveal the trails of animals, a rousing bear hunt was always eagerly anticipated.

In late December, therefore, when the leaves had fallen and were covered with a few inches of soft snow, Father took long hikes among the mountains, looking for the footprints of the elusive killer. On one of these trips he saw large bear tracks which disappeared at the mouth of a cave on Hague Mountain. The bear had taken up winter quarters where he would slumber peacefully, unless molested, until spring. As a matter of fact, the tracks

suggested the possibility of two bears within the cave.

With two brothers-in-law, Asa and Jay Leach, to help, Father built a smoke fire in the opening of the den. By waving their jackets, the men tried to force the fumes under the ledges into the den, but this strategy proved unsuccessful. The animals' sleeping quarters were either too far within the side of the mountain, or else the smoke was carried away through a vertical fissure in the protecting rock strata of the cave. Eventually, it became evident that a more daring procedure would be required. One of the men would have to crawl into the den and attempt to drive the occupant out. Uncle Jay, a fearless young man who had climbed down precipices in search of eagles' eggs, should have offered his services for this risky venture, but his courage failed him at this time. One bear, he thought, might not be so formidable; but if there should be more than one, he did not relish the task of incurring their ire. As a last resort, Father offered to undertake the dangerous business.

Flashlights had not then been invented, and since no one had brought a candle or a lantern, a torch had to be made out of a pitch-pine knot. With this in hand, sputtering and smoking at the end of a long stick, Father proceeded into the low-vaulted cavern. Except for his long-bladed skinning knife, he was unarmed. His task was to drive the bear, or bears, into the open, so that his waiting companions could get a chance to shoot.

His progress from the entrance to the roomy section of the cave was so slow that the torch had to be relighted and adjusted with additional pieces of white birch bark, and it began to appear that, unless the objective could

soon be reached, total darkness would engulf him in this risky spot. Father had just lighted his last roll of bark and was holding it aloft for a better chance to see when he beheld a startling sight. Crouched in front of him, watching with fierce, fiery eyes, were three bears, the largest of which was as white as a sheep.

Knowing that the element of surprise was his most effective weapon at this point, and holding his knife in readiness while hugging the side of the passage, Father waved his torch and shouted. A fight was not necessary. Confused by the gleaming torch and the booming voice, the bears rushed past their unwelcome intruder and made for the exit. Father turned to follow them, but since he was on hands and knees and the light had burned out, the way was slow-going.

On reaching the light of day again, he found two tremendously excited and chagrined companions, but no dead bears. The unexpected appearance of the white mystery bear was enough to startle the boldest hunter, and did, indeed, cause the watching brothers to pause until the bears were well in the open. When the old muzzle-loading guns were finally raised for action, one of them misfired, and the other failed to hit its mark. The ghost of the mountains was still at large.

The story the boys told of the white bear was received with skepticism and good-natured ridicule. Albinos with their pink eyes may appear in any animal family, but no one in that region had ever heard of a white member of the black bear species. It seemed extremely doubtful that a polar bear would stray so far from his icy, northern environment, and at that time there was no

record in our area of the rare white bears that live on Gribble Island near British Columbia. Hence, the men who claimed that they had seen such a freak brought on themselves much banter and derision. They were advised not to get so much smoke in their eyes, and warned to hold off on drinking hard cider before another bear hunt.

During the following spring, however, when Father's traps were skillfully set and baited with honey and fish, the white bear was caught. The laugh was now on the other side. People came from all around to see the white bearskin, and to hear Father tell the story of the "ghost bear."

While it may seem to us that a museum or some naturalist would have been eager to secure such a rare specimen, eighty years ago no one was sufficiently interested to make an adequate offer for this unusual pelt. After having it tanned, Father kept it for many years. Every summer, when city folk vacationed at Brant Lake, many of them came to our house to see the skin of the white black bear.

I had not yet arrived in *my* pinkish bare skin when this adventure occurred, but later, when the hoary show-piece was stored on a shelf in our loft, I suffered many a fearful nightmare, due to the fact that my bed was near this spookish object. As I slept on my straw mattress on the floor, the wraith would seem to come after me in hot pursuit. In fact, at one point the dread thing did come alive, for bumblebees, finding their way into the attic, made their home in the folds of this repulsive bundle. Believe me when I say that I shed no tears when the remains of that ghastly bear were taken into the garden

and burned. Let me say, in concluding this story, that apparitions are at times difficult to dispel. A year or so after the white bear had been caught, Father and one of my older sisters both saw, high on the northern ledges of a mountain, a perfect duplicate of the ghost bear. This second one, perhaps a twin of the one that had caused all the excitement, was never seen again.

FATHER AND PRINCE

BECAUSE of the danger involved in settling accounts with these killers of the forest, Mother urged Father to get a dog whom he could train to help him, just as his father had done back in Vermont. Moreover, there were now little children in the family who would be delighted to have a puppy. So on one of his return trips from the Schroon Lake region, Father carried in his pack basket a playful, black-and-brown puppy that had been bred from Shepherd and other strains for a bear dog. His name was Prince, a worthy name for a very splendid dog.

Prince grew and developed rapidly on the farm, and soon became helpful in going after the sheep and cattle when it was time to bring them from the pasture to the barnyard. When his master was busy with the farming, Prince found plenty of diversion in stalking woodchucks and keeping rabbits and squirrels out of our garden. In

the fall he was trained to hunt raccoon, a task in which he took great delight. Many raccoon skins were stretched to dry in our attic because Prince had chased these corn-stealing animals up trees so that they could be shot. As he matured he had more difficult duties to perform, and one of the first was in connection with an enormous bear whom I think of as Old Yellow Tusk.

Farmers whose pasture lands bordered the mountains were distressed because their sheep were being killed or badly torn. Armed with their shotguns they had watched for the return of the killer, who always seemed to come around when and where he was least expected, and also when it was too dark to aim at him. As usual, after the owners of the sheep had failed to kill the bear themselves, they asked Father to help them. Whether he was plowing or planting, Father was never too busy to go after a destructive bear.

Careful inspection of the gigantic tracks indicated that this bear must be an unusually large one, so an extra-strong trap was set back in the woods, where a sheep had been dragged and partially devoured. Even though the trap was carefully set under leaves and moss, with portions of the hapless sheep hung above, it remained undisturbed. Evidently the wary thief considered fresh mutton from another pasture more exciting adventure, and less risky.

A trap was then set farther back in a mountain pass where bears were known to travel. By using two small sticks, Jack-in-the-pulpits and small ferns were moved and set in the earth between the jaws of the trap. In spite of this careful effort to avoid suspicion and all traces of

human scent, the trap was found upside down and the tuber of the wild turnip no longer there. The bear may have had his toes pinched by some other trap, and was wise to the slightest odor of concealed iron and steel.

Another ruse known to trappers was next used. Fish and honeycomb were put on branches of trees along the runway, first where there was no trap, and then where there was one. This bait was high enough to make a bear walk on his hind legs to reach it, and also would get his nose away from the scent which he feared. Success resulted from this strategy, for Old Yellow Tusk, finding a tasty lunch along his way, became careless. Evidently he did not even feel the give under his foot until the brittle stick which supported the pan of the trap suddenly broke under his weight, causing the jaws of the trap to close.

Undoubtedly the big bear was not only painfully surprised, but also resentful at having been outwitted. When he had made a few attempts to free himself, only to find that a sturdy beech clog was slowing his movement, he turned to the impediment and chewed it until the chain slipped off the end of the clog, enabling him to make his way through the woods at a more rapid pace.

A few hours later when Father arrived at the scene and observed how the earth and small trees had been torn up and the clog demolished, he was greatly excited. He began to follow the well-marked trail along which the trap had been dragged, and from previous experience knew that he might have to travel a long way to overtake the escaping animal. He recalled times when he had been able to find the broken trap, but no bear. Presently it was evident that he was to have more of this same poor luck,

for, caught on a protruding knot of a fallen tree, he came upon the badly twisted trap from which the strong, bony leg had been pulled, leaving only some black, coarse hair.

The pursuit of this most-wanted criminal of the hills might have ended right there had Prince not been brought along for training as a bear dog. Prince was most eager to follow the tracks which he could smell so easily, and since this was good schooling for a dog his master decided to go on as long as daylight would permit. A few miles away, in a gloomy swamp of balsam and cedar trees, their quarry had lain down to rest. It was here that the pursued and the pursuers finally met.

A low growl from Prince gave warning that Father should proceed with caution, with his pistol held in readiness. The situation was one of real danger, for as experienced hunters know, to stop a charging bear one needs to be armed with a heavy-caliber rifle, a .30-30, or .30-6. While I am not sure whether the pistol used on this occasion was the Smith and Wesson, or the Stevens for which the first had been traded, I know that the gun which Father used during the seventies and at the time of his encounter with this huge bear was a 32-caliber, single-shot firearm. It had a skeleton breech which could be held against one's shoulder, but this attachment was never used. Father preferred to steady the pistol with his two hands. However, as he made his way into the swamp he was holding it with one hand, and gripping Prince's leash with the other.

Now, although wind from a threatening storm was bending the treetops, the bear must have heard Prince's menacing growl, for suddenly his massive head appeared

above some bushes not more than fifty yards away. Dropping the leash, Father took quick aim and fired. The bullet landed a little too high on the forehead. Instead of penetrating the brain and paralyzing the beast, the shot served only to infuriate him. With a hideous snort he turned toward his pursuers, and because a jammed shell delayed the reloading of the pistol, it seemed that he would surely have his revenge. A small man, a tiny gun, and an inexperienced dog were no match for six hundred pounds of charging fury.

To gain time Father started to dodge behind some small trees, but apparently he was too late. With menacing tusks and claws, the largest bear that he had ever seen was already coming down upon him. In a flash, he thought of his wife and children who would be waiting



for him to return home, and he remembered the Good Shepherd in whom he trusted.

Call it a miracle, or what you will, but at this moment Prince leaped at the bear and began to bite him in his hind parts. The bear's powerful paws seized the dog in a hug of death. Then, as one good turn deserves another, Father held the muzzle of the pistol close to the bear's head, just back of his ear, and a bullet went clear through his head, leaving him limp, and still as a fallen tree.

Although this initiation of Prince as a bear dog was a rough one, he came through it with glory, and without a scratch. He did have a temporary limp, but as he smelled the carcass of the bear while the shiny black pelt was being deftly removed, he quickly recovered from it, and was soon as spry as ever. When the heavy, fatty skin was at length adjusted on Father's strong shoulders, and man and dog turned homeward, Prince pranced about in great delight, as though to proclaim it a wonderful day.

It was long after dark when Mother, who had become quite apprehensive, heard Prince scratching on the back door to announce the return of the hunters. Her fears were soon dispelled when she saw his rapturous excitement as he rushed in. Presently she saw her husband emerging from the darkness, laden with a pack as large as those of the country peddlers, and she heard him announce, "I've got him!"

Our neighbors and their sheep could once more sleep in peace. For years afterward on a heap of stones back of our house, there were two large bear skulls. The first had a single penetration, while the second had two, one

in the forehead where it had been made a little too high for immediate results, the second indicating that a bullet had crashed all the way through both sides. As a small boy I often played around that stone heap and saw the skulls. And in a basket of souvenirs which Father kept on the top pantry shelf was a discolored tusk which he had once seen too close to his face for comfort. This fearsome relic, which I frequently handled as a lad, suggested the name Old Yellow Tusk.

To provide food and clothing for his growing family, Father found it necessary to extend his traplines farther north, and to be away from home sometimes two weeks at a time. These trips were made in the fall and spring, when the weather was often cold and stormy. Father frequently found shelter in an abandoned shanty formerly used by lumbermen. When such comforts could not be found, he would camp in a cave on the mountain side, or find an overhanging ledge. With a bough bed, his skins to sleep on, and a glowing fire, he would be quite snug. Sometimes, however, he encountered dangers which threatened to prevent him from ever returning home alive. One of these, a particularly close call, occurred when Father fell through the ice of the Boreas River, where the country is mountainous and isolated.

There had been a thaw in the early part of March, and so much of the snow had melted that it was a good time for Father to set out a line of traps far up under the highest peaks of the Adirondacks, near Hoffman Mountain and Mt. Marcy. Taking Prince with him, Father left home long before daylight, and by nine that evening he

was at the trapping grounds. The next day he set his traps, cut some firewood with his hatchet, and made his camp as comfortable as possible. During the night, the weather changed to an intense cold that froze up not only the smaller streams but also the Boreas River. As is so often the case in the mountains, the sudden cold weather was followed by a driving snowstorm.

As Father continued making his rounds, he saw that a trap he had set on a low island in a broad expanse of the river contained a valuable otter. There was a deep springhole there into which the animal had tumbled and drowned, all of which had been planned by the trapper to make sure of his catch.

The ice appeared to provide a bridge to the island, so after making a careful test, Father walked over to the trap, secured his game, and headed back toward the bank. When he was in mid-stream, the shell-ice, which had become suspended because of the lowering of the river, suddenly collapsed and he was plunged into the rushing, icy water.

Even on such a frigid day the situation would not have been desperate had it not been for the fact that the ice was breaking into many large cakes between which one could neither wade nor swim. Father well knew that many a man had lost his life under similar conditions with no one near to lend a hand. At that moment Prince, whose instinct had warned him not to trust the treacherous ice, realized that his master was in danger. Without hesitation he made his way into the swift, cold water, and swam through the cakes of ice. When he reached Father he turned, as if to offer his tail as a towline. With the big

dog's encouragement, both man and dog fought their way toward shallower water.

Buoyed up by his thick coat of hair, and propelled by four strong legs, Prince surged through the floating ice until Father was able to grasp an overhanging tree branch and pull himself to safety. The otter, secure in a knapsack, was also saved. Now the problem was to keep from freezing in the driving wind. As though racing for fun, they ran along the trail until they reached an old log camp where Father quickly made a warm fire. Once more, Father knew, Prince had been responsible for saving his life.

Nor were these the only times when man and dog cooperated with and understood each other in an almost mystical relationship. Once when Father had finished skinning a bear and was carving out some steak to take home, he noticed that Prince had not remained near him. He thought nothing of this, since he knew that the dog soon tired of smelling dead bear and would race through the woods looking for livelier game. This time Prince found plenty, but Father's poor hearing prevented him from becoming aware of what was going on until he had shifted his load to his back and started to make his way out of the woods. He had proceeded only a few hundred yards when he came to a spruce-covered knoll where there was evidence of a terrific fight between Prince and some bears. The ferns and small brush had been trampled, and all around were marks where huge feet had broken up the brown carpet of the forest. By examining the tracks, Father could see that two bears, a medium-sized one and a very large one, had ganged up on his dog.

Knowing the courage of Prince, but also realizing that a full-grown bear could easily knock a dog unconscious with a well-aimed blow of his great paws, Father became alarmed. Blood had been sprinkled about, but neither Prince nor the bears were in sight.

Suspecting the cause of the encounter, Father began to look up into the trees, and presently saw two cub bears hiding in the branches of a tall hemlock tree. With his pistol in hand, he made another search for Prince, but, not finding him, decided that the dog had temporarily driven the bears off. Turning to the hemlock, Father considered shooting the cubs and collecting the bounty, but he disliked the thought of harming such cunning little animals. Why not capture them alive and take them to his children? He could imagine how thrilled they would be with the baby cubs. Father happened to have some strong cord in his knapsack, so he left his gun and hatchet near the tree, climbed to the topmost branches, and carefully tied up first one and then the other tiny bear. As he reached out to them, each cub gave a little cry, a message of distress that listening ears were quick to hear.

Father prepared to come down, but at this moment saw a disturbing sight. There at the foot of the tree stood the glowering mother bear, on her hind feet and apparently about to come up the tree after him. This prospect was anything but inviting, especially since Father's gun and ax were on the ground. It was evident to him now that the bears had had a strategy. They had fought with Prince until the cubs had a chance to get up the tree, and then the large male bear had lured the dog away so that

the smaller bear could remain near her young. Possibly the two bears had succeeded in killing Prince or he was lying helpless in the brush.

With grave concern in his heart for his faithful dog, and yet with a desperate hope that he was still alive and within the sound of his voice, Father called from the tree



top, "Prince, Prince, come here, Prince!" Almost as promptly as he had come to Father's aid in the swift, ice-filled river, Prince responded to the summons. Though his shoulders and head were covered with blood, he was still full of fight. Running toward the tree where his master was trapped, he sank his sharp teeth in the bear's haunches. Surprised and angered by this rear attack, the bear suddenly turned away and ran for her life.

By the time Father was able to slide down the tree and seize his pistol, both bear and dog had disappeared among the trees. For some time Father held his gun in readiness against the return of one or both of the bears, but they did not appear. Finally, adjusting on his shoulders the bearskin and meat of the animal he had previously killed, and holding the cubs in his arms, Father turned toward home. Though he looked backward frequently with concern for his dog, it was more than an hour before Prince came in sight, considerably bedraggled and bloodied by the conflict but still jaunty.

It would be pleasant to be able to say that the little girls and the cubs lived happily together for a long time, but this was not the case. Bears grow up too rapidly, and do so much mischief that they cannot be kept as domestic pets. While the cubs were at first allowed to roam the house like puppies, they soon learned how to climb up on the pantry shelves looking for honey and sweets, overturning the milk and upsetting everything in their way. At that time there was no zoo nearby to send them to, so the time finally came when Father had to sell them to a fur dealer who wanted them for his show window in New York City. At Father's suggestion, the dealer put a sign in his window which read: "Bear in mind that we give a fair deal."

Meantime, we children did not grieve many days, for our mother cat brought from a secret place in the barn five beautiful kittens.

Just as no hunter of bears should be without his reliable dog, no farm home should be without its depend-

able cat. To guard our supplies of flour and meal, a family of cats always had a welcome place in our household. Our cats were alert day and night to protect our food inside the house, and also to wage war against outside enemies.

Rats never seemed to find their way into our valley, but the ever-present mice must have smelled the aroma of Mother's fragrant bread and considered it an invitation to dinner, for they were always looking for a chance to steal into the house. When corn began to ripen, hordes of chipmunks, using our rail fences as highways, emerged from the woods to feast on the golden kernels which we needed for our cornbread. No one would begrudge these pretty little creatures some gleanings from the harvest; but when, like the locusts, they kept coming to carry away another and another grain of corn, they needed to be kept in check.

Our cats enthusiastically sympathized with our dilemma and were eager to do their part, but one summer we had a cat who appeared for a time to be falling down on her job. She was nursing three baby kittens and needed nourishing food, but she would walk languidly near the fence, seemingly paying no attention to the saucy chipmunks which were traveling back and forth from our cornfield. As a small boy, I could not understand such negligence and apparent indifference, though the mystery was presently solved.

Early one morning, when I opened the front door to go for a pail of water, I saw on our stone step three lifeless chipmunks, evidently breakfast for the kittens who were now old enough to eat meat. It occurred to me that their mother, in a well-laid scheme to throw her game off

guard, had been deliberately playing the part of a harmless foe until the right time came for supplying her family with tasty, solid food. It was apparent, moreover, that this cat was not only wise in strategy, but skillful at numbers as well, for obviously she could count up to three.

While Prince recovered quickly from the bruises and scratches which he received in his fights with bears, raccoons and wildcats, his great heart gradually weakened with age until it became apparent that he should not be taken on long dangerous hunts. To be left behind was difficult for him to endure or understand. When he was kept in the house he would stand at the door and tease to be let out, as if to tell his mistress that he was urgently needed in the forest.

On one never-to-be-forgotten day someone opened the door and Prince, watching for just such an opportunity, dashed out. He smelled the tracks that he knew so well and disappeared over the hill with something of his former speed. By exerting all the skill of his years of experience and training, he overtook his master far back in the mountains where there had once occurred a lively experience with a bear Prince had helped to dispatch. This time there was no game. Father was returning home after setting a bear trap.

Prince, however, seemed to have no wish to go home. Even after a good rest, he walked down the trail only a little way, and then lay down. Father thought that the dog would gradually follow him out of the woods, as he had done on former occasions, so he went back to the house and ate his supper. Then, since Prince did not show

up, Father hastily retraced his steps back to the trap, where the sight that met his eyes was almost too distressing to relate, and just as difficult to explain.

Who can tell all that goes on in a dog's brain? Did Prince, realizing that his end was near, wish to make sure that he would never again be left at home? Or, fearing that he might not be present to defend his master from a charging bear, did he determine to prevent such a circumstance from occurring? Although he had seen traps set, and had been taught to avoid them, he had gone back to this trap and had brought both feet down hard on the pan. His front legs were caught and badly crushed. Perhaps he had brought his feet down so emphatically to tell Father that if they were not going to be together any more, all trapping should be given up.

Heartbroken, Father knelt beside Prince and tried to do what he could to save the dog's life. Prince, however, had other plans, for he growled and snapped at the hands reaching down to help him. Father might have used chloroform in such an emergency, but it was not available. Besides, it was too late, for suddenly the tired heart ceased to beat and the valiant dog obtained his wish to remain in the forest forever.

THE BIG CATAMOUNT

NOT LONG after the death of Prince, Father heard of some puppies over in Vermont which had been especially bred for bear dogs. They were a mixture of various strains—Shepherd, Saint Bernard, Black Bull, and one or two others. Making a hasty trip over to the Green Mountains, Father returned with one of the prize pups in his packbasket. Our joy was unbounded when we saw the golden head and paws of the puppy extending from its snug cover. We would now have a pet to play with, a dog which would accompany us through the woods to the spring, and go with us after the cows in the evening.

The first task was to select a name for the new member of the family. Because of the long, thick fur on his neck and chest, we thought he resembled a lion; and so we called him Lion. At first, of course, he was far from lion-like, and really quite timid. On his first trip to see the

cattle in the barn, Lion tumbled over backward when one of the oxen lowered his head and breathed on him. Later on, however, he grew more courageous; and once when he had carelessly let his tail extend between the boards of the pigpen so that a pig was tempted to taste it, Lion, in retaliation for the insult, leaped into the pen and nipped the pig on one of its ears.

While Lion was still too young to go after bears, Father made his trips alone. On one such trip he didn't carry his pistol, as he had been doing some repair work on it; of course, that was the time when he needed it most, for he found a very lively and unfriendly bear in one of his traps. Observing that the trap and clog were securely hitched to some bushes, Father decided to use a club on the bear. He cut one which he thought would be the right size, approached the bear, and struck at his head. The bear brought up a paw and easily knocked the heavy stick to one side. He did the same thing again and again, until Father cut a lighter stick which could be handled with greater speed. With this he feinted once, then followed with a quick blow high up on the bear's snout. This comparatively light blow stunned the animal completely. When telling of this encounter later on, Father claimed that a bear can be knocked senseless just as easily as a raccoon, if the blow lands in the right place.

Another exciting experience occurred when Father was traveling alone to one of his more remote traplines far up in the Adirondacks. He stopped at a log shanty where some woodsmen were working on a lumber job.

They told him they had been terrified because of the presence of some large, unknown animal in the vicinity. None of them dared to go out of doors after dark, and they warned Father that it would be exceedingly dangerous for a man with defective hearing to venture alone up the mountain with so small a gun.

From what he was told about the nocturnal prowler, Father inferred that the animal was a lynx, a fierce member of the mountain lion family. In addition to the strong, sharp claws of a lynx which can tear a dog to shreds, it has an ear-splitting screech, similar to that of a woman in mortal terror. A man who had previously faced a charging bear and killed it with a single bullet described his reaction when he heard for the first time the hideous cry of a lynx. It happened when he was hunting deer in the Maine woods. The silence of the forest was suddenly rent with a noise so terrifying that the hair of his head actually stood up straight!

The lumberjacks in this Adirondack camp had frequently been awakened from sound slumber by such blood-curdling cries, but it was more than the frightful scream that had made them afraid. As they explained to Father, who had planned to stop with them only one night, the catamount had actually pounced upon one of their men who had ventured out after dark, and had clawed him so severely that he died. They had heard that a lynx seldom, if ever, attacks a human being; and so there was much discussion as to what the daemon-spirited beast might be.

The more Father heard about this beast and the way

it often leaped upon the roof of the shanty at night, the more eager he became to go after it. Early the next morning he selected two strong traps and headed for the dense forest of spruce and hemlock on the slopes above the camp. He soon saw a trail of large tracks that led upward, but presently he saw deer tracks which caused him to deviate from his main course and to proceed with stealth. After he had located and shot a small deer, a portion of which he needed for bait, Father turned back to the winding path and made for the rocky terrain higher up.

After an hour's climb he came to some boulders at the base of a jagged cliff, where he saw feathers of partridge, fur of rabbits, and bones of deer. For all he could tell, fiercely-gleaming eyes might already be watching him from a secluded lair under the nearby ledges. Father decided to set his traps here. Bending down two stout saplings for spring poles, and securing them in an arched position with stakes, he fastened the chains of his traps to the tops of the bent trees, covered the jaws of steel, and hung up the bait.

Everything had to be done with care and skill. In fact, Father took so much time and pains that the men at the shanty had begun to fear for his life. Late in the afternoon, when dark clouds were beginning to bring on an early evening, they saw Father approaching the camp carrying some object on his shoulders. It was the hind quarters of the deer which he had shot earlier. Though pleased with the prospect of feasting on venison as a welcome change from pork and beans, the men good-naturedly chided their guest for hunting deer instead of

tracking down the big cat. Father replied calmly: "Let's wait until tomorrow, and see what happens."

When Father went up the mountain the next day to inspect his traps, he approached them cautiously. He was not afraid, for whether traveling through the forest by day or by night, he was never disturbed by the thought that some animal might attack him. However, he had learned that it was wise to walk stealthily when nearing a trap which might have large game in it. Presently, through an opening among the branches of the evergreens, he saw that he had made a catch, and that the animal looked like a deer. There had been no sign of deer at the particular spot where he had set his traps, but if one had accidentally been caught, he knew that he would be teased even more than on the previous night. Then he saw that the creature had torn bark from trees and had broken limbs and branches as far as it could reach in every direction. A closer view revealed an extra large lynx, caught by a hind leg and suspended just a few inches above the ground. The color and markings of the animal, however, were different from those of any lynx or wildcat which Father had previously caught. Because of its enormous size and the fact that it had fatally attacked a man, he guessed that it might be a Canadian lynx, of which he had heard. There is even the possibility that this animal was one of the remaining pumas, or mountain lions, which in earlier years ranged throughout the forests of the northeast to Maine, spreading terror when seen or heard by early pioneers.

At any rate, when the trapper returned to the lumber

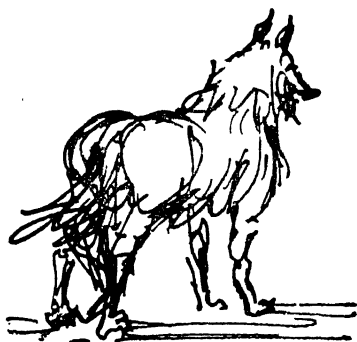
camp, he and his huge, ugly-looking cat became the center of interest and respect. The men, now delivered from the cause of their fears, urged Father to stop over with them whenever he happened to be trapping in their vicinity.

LION, THE BEAR DOG

LION soon became a strong, husky dog. He was a good farm dog, and learned to be gentle with the cattle and sheep as he helped to drive them from the pasture to the barn. He was always on the alert for opportunities to be of service. If Father was fishing the brook Lion would stand by quietly in order not to frighten the fish, and if a trout happened to drop off the hook, Lion would retrieve it before it had a chance to flop back into the water. However, he liked hunting best of all. Whenever he saw Father reach for his gun he would go into ecstasy. Since I was a small boy at the time, I do not recall much about Lion as a young dog but I have gathered his story from older sisters and brothers, and certain images of him are stamped on my mind. I can see him jumping up and down when the mere handling of a gun suggested the possibility of going after game. I remember that I had to keep out of the way to avoid being

knocked over. At that time I could not have been more than two or three years old.

Lion grew to be a larger and stronger dog than Prince, and was so quick that he made short work of raccoons and other small animals. When he had a chance to go to Father's aid at a time when a wounded bear was charging, he proved that he had the spirit of old Prince. He not only stopped the mad rush of the beast, but more than held his own in the fight which ensued.



Father always taught his dogs obedience and good manners. He did not want them to fight like common curs, but on one occasion he made an exception. A man named Davis, who lived down on the crossroad, owned a dog of large size and mean disposition called Ruff. This ill-trained dog, if not restrained, attacked all other dogs that came along, and sent them on their way limping and bleeding. He was also very menacing to us children, growling and rearing up when we walked innocently along the road that he considered his domain. Davis boasted that his dog could lick anything on four legs.

Whenever Father had Lion with him as he passed the Davis house, he kept the dog close to his side and avoided trouble. Lion himself showed no inclination to scrap. As a fighter against wildcats and bears, he seemed to consider himself above a run-in with a mere house dog. Davis scoffed at Father and Lion, and misinterpreted their behavior as cowardly. He said, "It's natural for dogs to bark and bite. They soon learn which one is boss, and after that they get along all right." Father replied, "Lion is still a young dog, and on my trapping trips I have to pass many houses where there are dogs. I don't want Lion fighting with every new dog he sees." But when Davis added, "My husky would eat up your pampered bear-dog," Father yielded. He agreed to a fight but suggested that the dogs be separated before either one could do the other much damage. Davis said, "No, let them fight until one of them knows he's licked."

Ruff was growling out his challenges and insults as Father said, "Take him, Lion." No time was lost in sparring or circling for position. Lion must have sensed all the crimes that had been committed against the smaller and weaker members of his kind, and was eager to avenge them. The two big dogs came together with furious impact, and the Davis dog went over backwards. As if he were an animal to be killed and skinned, Lion caught his adversary by the throat and began to shake the life out of him.

The fight did not last more than a minute. Davis shouted to Father, "Take him off, take your dog off! He's killing my dog!" Father readily consented, and pulled Lion away. "That's enough, Lion; that's enough."

Mr. Davis no longer had any doubt about which dog was the champion in that neighborhood.

More than once Lion saved his master from being injured by a bear. And in the spring of the year, when bears prey on sheep that are bearing their young, Lion was a faithful guard in our pasture. He also made our valley so unhealthy for wildcats that they moved away. In fact, it was his reputation for ridding the woods of these marauding cats that almost cost him his life.

Father's nephew from Vermont asked permission to take Lion over to his state to hunt down and drive out the many bobcats which were decimating the small game of that region. He promised to take good care of our dog and to bring him back to us by spring, when the bears would be emerging from their dens. However, circumstances arose which interfered with the keeping of the agreement.

On a long hike through crusted snow Ally, as our cousin was nicknamed, injured a leg so severely that soon after his return home he had to leave the dog with a friend while he went to a hospital for treatment. Meantime, the friend, who was then courting a young lady, gave his undivided attention to her and even presumed to ask her to help him care for the dog. One cold, blustery day she ordered Lion out of the house. Quite naturally he refused to obey, and was given a cruel beating by the suitor. At the first opportunity, Lion ran away.

A few weeks later a letter was delivered to us telling of the disappearance of our beloved dog. We were terribly distressed, but tried to reassure ourselves that a dog as smart as Lion would be able to find his way back to

us, even though he had been transported first by foot, then by train, and again by foot, over a distance of more than seventy-five miles. To be sure, Lake George and Lake Champlain formed intervening barriers and the water at that time of the year was very cold and covered with ice around the shores.

A second letter, close on the heels of the first, brought more disturbing information. A farmer had found in his pasture a dead yearling heifer which, according to visible tracks, had been killed and partly eaten by a large dog. The letter went on to say that a hunter had followed the large footprints of a dog in the snow and had set traps near a rocky den.

It was difficult for us to believe that our Lion was the culprit, for he had never molested any livestock in our valley. On the contrary, he had frequently slept among our sheep. Still, he might have been driven by hunger to help himself to the only food available.

Father headed immediately for Vermont. Defying a blinding snowstorm that overtook him on Hague Mountain, he made his way by foot to Ticonderoga and, when night came on, continued steadily down to Whitehall, across to Poultney, and then in a southerly direction to Dorset, Vermont. At dawn he had traveled sixty-five miles, and had several miles to go to reach the back district where Lion was in jeopardy.

When he came to the more remote houses among the hills, he learned that Lion had managed to escape from the den where the hunter had trailed him. The traps had been sprung, and the large one was missing. The chain had been broken close to the stake to which it had been

fastened. Tracks which the fleeing dog had made in the snow led to another cave farther back in the mountains. To make sure that his prize would not elude him again, the hunter had blocked the entrance to the cave and hurried home for help. Father was informed that four men had started off before daylight to do his big dog to death.

The men had armed themselves with muskets, loaded with buckshot. They expected to smoke Lion out of the cave, so had taken a bag of old rags for producing smoke, and blankets to force the suffocating fumes into the more distant recesses. They were eager for sport, and for the fifty-dollar reward that was on Lion's head.

In spite of their careful preparations, the plan did not work as well as had been anticipated. An aperture in the ledges produced an upward draft which carried some of the smoke away. Additional rags were ignited, and a long pole used to push them farther into the cavity. After a long wait the sound of a cough proved that the smoke was reaching its intended victim. The blankets were removed from the opening, and the men raised their guns to shoot. The clinking of metal on stones told them that the dog was coming out for air.

At this moment Father came racing through the woods and ordered the men to stop. Considerably surprised at the appearance of this black-bearded stranger, the men looked suspicious, and annoyed at being interrupted. One of them asked Father who he was.

"I'm not surprised you don't remember me," Father answered. "I'm Ed Roberts, son of Allen Roberts, the

Green Mountain bear hunter some of you must recall." Two of the men nodded.

"I left these parts some twenty years ago and moved over to the Adirondacks where I do considerable bear hunting myself. This dog you plan to kill once saved me from an enormous bear."

Since the heavy trap had apparently slowed Lion's progress in emerging from the smoke-filled cave, the men had to listen.

"I got this dog from your own town, seven years ago when he was a pup. He's a great bear dog. He's also death on wildcats. In fact, it was to help clear the wildcats out of your county that I agreed to lend him to my nephew Ally. I was told that your turkeys and small game were being destroyed."

Father told them briefly of Ally's bad luck and of the events leading up to Lion's misfortune. "I can't explain it," he added. "Lion was a sheep dog before he ever learned to hunt—one of the best I ever had. But being lost and among strangers, he had to turn to hunting for his food. I guess it was the only thing he could do."

The rough-looking woodsmen and hunters acknowledged the truth of this last remark. Reassured by their attention, Father continued. "Over in my neighborhood we're not troubled by wildcats. Lion drove them all off."

"Come to think of it," one of the men said, "I haven't lost a turkey for six weeks, and I haven't heard of anyone else losing any either. Maybe the dog has earned his keep. Besides, the runt heifers he killed weren't worth much anyway."

"Of course I'll pay for the heifers," Father said. "I'm a trifle short on cash right now, but I expect to sell some fur soon, and when the check comes I'll make things right with you."

"What about my reward?" another of the men complained. "I've spent more than a week following tracks and setting traps. Are you going to cheat me out of the money now?"

The first man who had addressed Father was evidently the leader of the group. "The reward's off! I started this thing before I knew the facts. Dogs as well as people have a right to a fair trial. Let's help Ed Roberts get his dog out of that damned trap."

A plaintive whine from the dark hole indicated that Lion had heard his master's voice and was calling for his help. It didn't take long for Father to crawl in beside his dog and to release Lion's badly swollen hind leg from the jaws of the trap. Fortunately, the leg was not broken and Father bound it up with rags. The party was soon on its way out of the rough terrain.

Although weak from lack of food, Lion could hobble along down the trail. The men who had so recently been bent on shooting him now did what they could to make amends for their cruelty. They helped Lion over the hard places and offered him dried venison and a place by the fire when the group reached the mountain community.

For the return home my cousin Ally contributed a wagon, heaped with straw on which Lion was content to rest and lick his injured paw. We children vied with one another to give Lion the welcome he deserved, hugging him and rubbing coon oil on his wounds. Lion endured

this attention with remarkable patience, thumping his great tail on the floor. Probably his best reward was provided by Mother and my sister Cordie, who baked him a cornbread johnnycake with bacon drippings.

Lion was as gentle as ever toward us children, and contrary to the claim that a dog who has once killed and tasted the warm blood of cattle can never be trusted with farm stock, he remained dependable in rounding up our cows and sheep.

He lived on to increase his reputation as a hunting dog. In his older years Lion was seldom called on to tackle a bear, but he could still make short work of the largest raccoon, and he found great pleasure in stalking woodchucks. Because of his advancing age and a slight limp during the cold weather, we tried to keep him by the fireside as much as possible. However, if Father so much as got up to go outside for more firewood, Lion was the first at the door, eager to be tracking down the scents and following the wild trails that gave him such delight.

In the summer, as he grew older, Lion used to lie on some hay near our barn door, where he could watch our comings and goings. I remember how the warm sun shone down on his magnificent golden coat. Then one morning we found him, stretched before the door he had guarded so faithfully and long, in his last sleep. We felt sure that he had slipped quietly away to join our other brave dogs.

THE BLIZZARD OF '88

EARLY in March, 1888, when a big thaw indicated that winter might be breaking up, Father thought the weather conditions right for one more try at trapping fisher and marten far back among the higher Adirondacks. Since the maple sugar season was rapidly approaching, there was hardly a day to spare for such a trip, but Father urgently needed ready money. One of our oxen had broken a leg, and had had to be killed. We needed a new yoke of oxen to draw up the sap and to do the spring plowing. A man who lived a few miles away had a pair of three-year-old steers for sale, but they were so perfectly matched that he was asking one hundred dollars for them; and at that time one hundred dollars was a lot of money for us to raise.

So Father loaded his packbasket with traps and other necessities and started off for the valuable pelts. He left long before dawn, and by 9 P.M. reached Mt. Marcy, more than sixty miles from our house. There was no abandoned shanty in the locality for shelter, so he made his headquarters in a cave where he had often camped before. The next day he set his traps, gathered wood to cook his pork and beans, and brought in evergreen



boughs for his bed. He saw numerous animal tracks and these made him confident and hopeful. On his first round to his traps he was not disappointed, and even felt that he might make a record catch if his luck continued. But suddenly the weather changed to an intense cold, and the furbearers, as if warned of an approaching calamity, disappeared. Father retired to his cave on Marcy, and, according to his custom, prepared to rest on Sunday, which was the next day. If, as the signs told him, a storm was

coming, he was ready for it; but instead of an ordinary late-winter storm, the blizzard of '88 caught him on this isolated, wind-swept mountain.

Father anticipated only a few inches of snow, and hoped that the storm would be over by Monday morning. It became increasingly evident, however, that this was no usual fall of snow. As if in great wrath, and fighting for the right-of-way up and down this highest peak of the Adirondacks, the biting wind whistled and howled through the swaying trees, and tried the strength of every cliff. Many trees came crashing to the earth, and broken limbs were blown about like scraps of paper. The Bible-reading trapper recalled the time when the prophet Elijah took refuge in a cave, "and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord." Through the night and day, and on through the following night and day, the fury of the storm built the bulwarks of snow higher and higher.

I was five years old at the time, too young to know much about anxiety; but Mother, even though she realized Father's resourcefulness in taking care of himself, must have been tempted to worry as the terrific wind wrestled at our doors and windows. She knew that he was acquainted with caves and dens into which he might go for shelter, and that if it was necessary he would not hesitate to take over the sleeping quarters of a bear. But there was the danger that he would become so concerned for the safety of his family that he would attempt to make his way back home. She had heard of other strong men losing their lives in such a vain effort.

We did not fear that our bread-winner would starve.

A skillful trapper can usually provide himself with plenty of food in any emergency. Rabbits, raccoon, and partridges are easy to catch or shoot, and were nearly always available among the hills and mountains. And Father generally carried with him a few easily prepared food-stuffs such as cornmeal, beans, and salt pork. Nor did he have to worry lest we run out of provisions at home. With the barrel of flour, bag of cornmeal, potatoes in the cellar, and milk and butter from our cows, we were stocked almost as well as a neighborhood grocery store.

However, we were prisoners of the storm. The full fury of the blizzard hit the Adirondack region. The temperature went down to twenty and thirty below zero, felt all the more because of the high wind. The snow was four feet deep around our house, and back in the woods it was deeper still. Great drifts ten to twenty feet high were everywhere. Our road was impassable, and not a single neighbor was able to come to our house to speak a word of encouragement or ask after our welfare.

Fortunately, there was wood in the shed, though it was covered with snow that had been driven through the cracks between the boards. My own task was to keep the woodbox full, and to make pine shavings at night with which to rekindle the fire in the morning. I remember putting sticks in the oven to warm and dry, so that we would be assured of a steady fire when the wood was laid on the glowing coals above. John and Ruel shoveled a path to the barn, which was more than a hundred feet away, fed the cattle and sheep, and milked the two cows. Keeping this path open was not easy, for if there is anything that drifting snow likes, it is filling a narrow

path. To get water for the stock, and for cooking and washing, it was necessary to bring in pails of snow to be melted on the stove.

At the height of the howling wind, when our small house vibrated and loose clapboards rattled, it seemed to me that packs of wolves must be huffing and puffing to blow our doors down. Indeed, the fine snow found cracks in our loft through which it came in tiny drifts close to my straw mattress in the attic. I snuggled close to my brother John for warmth and comfort.

When Father had prepared to take this trip, Mother had urged him to include snowshoes in his pack, but he had thought the winter was too far gone for such equipment. He changed his mind when the storm continued through Monday, and the snow rose up to his shoulders. There was only one thing for him to do: he must make himself some snowshoes. Fortunately, he had learned how to weave web-like supports for both feet and hands. Cutting some flexible sapling branches, he bent them to the shape of snowshoes, fastened them in this form with copper wire (which he carried for mending traplines and making snares to catch rabbits), and crisscrossed them with strong withes. To lighten his pack, he left everything that he could spare in the cave, but the sub-zero weather had frozen his four fishers and two sable so quickly that he had been unable to skin them.

As soon as the storm subsided a bit, Father put his heavy, awkward burden on his back, fastened his improvised snowshoes to his feet and hands, and, on all fours, began his descent. Down the slopes and past the flows,

he made his way over gigantic drifts and treacherous snow pockets. As he took each laborious step, the usually well-loved forest seemed more like a prison of snow. Finally, reaching the clearings, Father saw men with oxen attempting to break roads from one house to another. And now, in spite of the drifting snow, he was able to discard his cumbersome supports. With many zigzags, he pushed on with more speed in an upright position. His large rubbers, pulled on over homemade sheepskin moccasins, not only kept his feet warm but also enabled him to make rapid progress.

Late in the evening of the second day after the storm had abated, a familiar stamping at our back door indicated that Father was trying to leave all traces of the great blizzard behind him. With energy that did not know the meaning of the word "tired," he had made his way over those more than sixty miles of snow-filled roads in record time.

Even though I was then so young, I remember seeing Father standing by the kitchen stove as he pulled the ice from his beard, and I recall the joyous relief that filled our hearts. Father had not only lived through the storm, but also had brought back with him valuable furs which, later on, were sold for considerably more than was needed to purchase the splendidly matched yoke of oxen. I know also that after eating his late supper, he took his Bible from the shelf back of the table and read a full chapter from its pages. We all then kneeled for the evening prayer.

During the next few days a warmer south wind and

bright sun melted the snow and the sap began to run. The maple-sugar season was upon us, and the Blizzard of '88, for our family at least, became only a pleasantly exciting topic of conversation.

MAKING MAPLE SUGAR

WHILE wood-chopping, fishing, skating, and sliding down hill broke the monotony of long winters, the spring sugaring brought us the sweetest delight. Along about the middle of March, when warmer sunshine encouraged the crows to return and favored the industry of the woodpeckers, we tapped our maples. It was hard work to gather enough wood to boil down a barrel of sap until it thickened into a gallon of syrup, and the task of making paths to the trees through the accumulated snows of winter and collecting the liquid from the buckets afforded plenty of exercise. However, the prospect of quick returns in the form of wax on snow, and the later pleasure of pure maple syrup for griddle cakes and corn bread made the labor much more exciting than hoeing potatoes and getting up the hay.

I remember that a few days after the Blizzard of '88, when the snow had settled, I followed in Father's foot-

steps as with brace and bit, spouts and buckets, he tapped some of our big maples over on the south side of a hill. In our region, in spite of occasional thaws, the snow remained on the ground until mid-April. Late snows, and of course the Blizzard of '88, naturally made the task of collecting the sap more difficult, since we had to remove snow from each bucket and, not infrequently, ice as well. The sap we gathered was boiled down in milk pans on our range; and the syrup was as clear as crystal.

It is a well-known fact that sap is sweeter and syrup of higher quality when the sun warms the maple trees after a hard freeze. For this reason people who know about sugaring prefer the products from the first run of the trees, instead of the sap which comes later in milder weather. I recall hearing it said that the deep-freeze of early March, 1888, made for a particularly clear and tasty syrup and whiter cakes of sugar.

At our house the feast of maple sweets was not one of short duration. The big cakes of sugar for year-round use were stored in a large tin trunk, in order to keep mice and other intruders from sampling them. Small cakes were laid by as candy. I have often held a stalk of rhubarb in one hand and a piece of maple sugar in the other, and by taking alternate bites of the sour and the sweet given my sense of taste a rare treat. The syrup for griddle cakes and corn bread was kept in bottles in the cool-cellar, where the canned berries were.

Did you ever eat shortcake made with wild strawberries, thick cream, and grated maple sugar? If you have, you know what I mean when I speak of Mother's baking.

She mixed the berries, cream, and sugar in a bowl, and then spread both layers of the cake with this tasty mixture.

Grated maple sugar also made a tempting filler for the sandwiches we took to school for lunch; and blueberry pudding, sprinkled with maple sugar, was a dessert fit for royalty. I have imitated some of the little food tricks that Mother used, and have grated maple sugar over the oatmeal served to friends on camping trips. Of course, out in the open, people have keener appetites, but I have found that oatmeal served in this manner will call forth exclamations of praise.

For a delightful variation of taste, we stirred butter-nut meats into thick maple syrup and made a soft-textured candy which no one can resist once he has tried it.

I am not advertising for any maple products company, but I have wondered why it is that so many people living in New England have never tasted maple wax on snow. One reason may be that the snow does not last long enough in the more southern sections; but if one will store up a gallon or two of maple syrup, and exercise the necessary self-control to keep some of it until the snows of January and February come, he will be well rewarded. The syrup must be boiled down until it begins to drip lazily from a spoon or ladle as it is tested by dropping a bit on a pan of clean, packed snow. When the syrup hardens into a ribbon almost as soon as it touches the cold snow, it is ready for eating. Pour the reddish liquid slowly around in circles, or in any way you wish, and then, with fork in hand, break it up, or wind it up, and begin to

enjoy the rich fruit of the maples. If you serve the treat to anyone with false teeth, take special pains not to have the syrup too thick when it is poured on the snow! We boys sometimes played tricks on our dog by giving him rather hard maple wax that stuck his teeth together.

HOME REMEDIES

FROM his parents in Vermont, and from an aged Indian who lived on our farm for a few years after the Civil War, Father learned about roots, barks, and herbs which were supposed to be specific remedies for various human ailments. For a spring tonic, when sulphur and molasses needed to be supplemented, he concocted a brew of wintergreen leaves, sarsaparilla roots, cherry bark, boneset, and various other ingredients. Some of these items, such as boneset and nervine roots, made potions bitter as gall, but when sufficiently sweetened with maple sugar the taste was very agreeable.

Once on a trip to a bear trap, I saw Father drop to his knees to dig up a mass of yellow, hairlike roots which he called nervine. A few weeks later a neighbor came to ask if we happened to have that particular medicine. He wanted some for his mother, who was having a nervous attack. I found afterwards that a cure had been effected.

My people never made any charge for these nature remedies, but dispensed them freely.

For the common cold, roots of ginseng, senega, and the bulbs of wild turnips (our name for Jack-in-the-pulpit) were dried, ground to a powder, and mixed with honey. Unless plenty of honey was used, it was torture to take the wild turnip powder. A city man who was traveling through the woods with Father once insisted on tasting the wild turnip food, which bears eat with relish. The fiery smarting became so unbearable that the gentleman ran to a brook to rinse out his mouth. Unfortunately, water merely made the agony worse. When our city friend finally recovered, he was perfectly willing to leave all the Indian turnips to the bears. A lady who once took a tiny bite of this forest food said she felt as though her tongue had been split apart.

Alive to tell the story, I, as well as all the other members of the Roberts family, had to take this powerful medicine whenever I had a cold and sore throat. At one time, when diphtheria was epidemic and we showed symptoms of catching it, we were given the ground wild turnip mixed with honey. In addition, we had to take skunk's oil, which was also rubbed on our throats. Whatever our illness was, we survived both that and the remedies.

Our cellar was kept well-stocked with oils of raccoon, woodchuck, skunk, and bear. Aside from the potency of these animal oils for both internal and external use, there was no question about their value for softening the leather boots with which we were supplied every fall. When we walked through the snow, the leather became hard, mak-

ing it necessary to use a bootjack to free our feet at night, and to have super-human strength to get the stiff boots on again in the morning. The oil helped to keep the leather pliable.

People from far and near frequently came to our house to obtain wild-animal oils. If they did not need the stuff for their personal use, they wanted it to rub on the joints of their lame horses, or as a sure cure for the



heaves. A clergyman who was a bald as a plate once came after some bear's oil which he intended to mix with alcohol to stimulate the growth of his hair. If his formula had produced the desired results, we might have become millionaires—and I might have more use for a comb than I do now.

There is the story of a country quack who had just finished his sales talk about a cure for rheumatism when a listener in the crowd spoke up and said that a bottle

of the magic elixir which he had bought had not done him any good. The quick-witted quack replied, "I don't wonder at all. The chemist who mixed up that batch of medicine forgot to put bear's oil in it." As far as I remember, we never attempted to swallow any bear's oil, but once when an older sister was so choked up with bronchitis that she could hardly breathe, she consented to take some skunk's oil. This gagged her sufficiently to open her breathing passages, after which she willingly admitted her debt to the lowly skunk.

A word should also be spoken for coon's oil, for on one occasion when we boys were to provide the popcorn for a neighborhood party, it was discovered at the last minute that we were short of butter. Undaunted, my older brother Ruel, who had recently caught two fat raccoon, mixed a quantity of their oil with the popcorn, salted it, and carried two pails of it to the party. Everyone praised the popcorn as the best they had ever eaten.

In addition to herbs, roots, barks, and oils, Father made a salve which won a high reputation. The main ingredients in this, though I do not remember the proportions, were spruce gum, resin, beeswax, and sheep tallow. These items were melted together on the stove, cooled, and made into convenient rolls for treating all our cuts and scratches. We also chewed the spruce gum, and found it a soothing relief for sore throat.

The wintergreen leaves, which we combined with various barks to make our spring tonic, were chewed too. We boys thought of them as a substitute for chewing tobacco. Much later, when I spoke to a retired teacher of medicine about this, he told me that aspirin is derived,

in part at least, from wintergreen leaves. I have never checked this, but I know that the new wintergreen plants were a tasty delicacy to chew and eat in the spring.

However helpful our home remedies may have been for curative purposes, there were a few times when we felt the need of outside aid. When sister Antha was a young girl she had a stomach disorder which defied all of our therapeutic efforts. Bitter boneset tea and the syrup of roots and barks were administered in vain. The child lost her appetite, and could not retain food of the simplest kind. Day after day she grew steadily worse, until finally a doctor was called. Our parents hoped that he would be able to find the cause of the illness, and also a cure for it; but his prescriptions were no more effective than those Mother had been using. Baffled by the failure of his efforts, the physician asked permission to consult with a noted city doctor who was spending his vacation at Brant Lake. Hope revived as the two men stood over little Antha, trying to agree on the treatment of the disorder. A change of medicine was made, and a bottle of dark-colored liquid was left, with direction that a teaspoonful be administered every three hours.

By this time Mother had become very tired. She had been caring for Antha night and day for several weeks and two younger daughters, Cordie and Clara, also required attention. The older daughters, Alice and Anna, helped all they could during the day, and Father, who was busy with the crops and the haying, took his turn as nurse at night. The new medicine was given on schedule, and a diet of warm milk and toast was prepared as directed. However, the sick child could not bear the sight

of food. Poor Antha, who never seemed to be robust like her older sisters, was now reduced to skin and bones, and it was pitiful to see her gradually growing weaker and weaker.

Mother was a quiet and firm believer, but the trial of her faith had been long; and, in spite of prayers, she saw her daughter grow steadily worse. One afternoon, when she saw Antha's frail fingers listlessly picking at the bed covering—a sign which she had always understood meant that death was near—she sent Alice into the field to call Father, while she rushed to the pantry for the medicine. She seized the bottle of dark-colored liquid, poured out a partial teaspoonful, and lifting Antha's head up a trifle with one hand, emptied the contents of the spoon into her mouth. Instantly, a convulsive cough and cry of agony called attention to the mistake that had been made. Instead of the prescribed medicine, Mother had administered iodine.

She could not think of any antidote for iodine poisoning, but in an effort to counteract the burning in her child's mouth and throat, caught up a piece of apple pie from the table and, with a combination of persuasion and force, succeeded in getting it chewed and swallowed.

When Father rushed into the house and learned what had happened, it seemed to him that everything was conspiring against their efforts to save Antha's life. The iodine itself might be enough to cause death to someone so weak, and apple pie in a stomach which could not digest the simplest foods would surely be disastrous. Meantime, exhausted by the extra exertion or fainting because of the pain, little Antha closed her eyes and lay very still. Father

and Mother watched at her bedside for a long time, and gradually it seemed to them that instead of growing weaker, her breathing was becoming stronger and more normal. And when the sleep was finished it was evident that Antha was much improved. Indeed, from that hour, her recovery was remarkable. It was as though the healing words had been spoken as they once had to Jairus' daughter: "Little girl, I say unto thee, arise."

My parents did not forget to give thanks to Him who had said, "Fear not, only believe," but neither did they write down the combination of iodine and apple pie as a home remedy.

OUR NEW DOG GYP

A FEW months after our dog Lion had finished his good life, Father brought home another dog. This one was a black Spanish setter, and was said to be a thoroughbred of high value. I must admit that the little aristocrat looked rather woebegone when he came to live with us. He had been brought from New York as a pet for two boys who, during the summer, spent their vacation on an island of Brant Lake. We found out that he had fared poorly at their hands. The boys had tied his food on a float and made him swim after it. For amusement they fastened tin cans to his tail, and laughed at his efforts to free himself.

However, the misused dog had discovered a way of getting even. When the family slept late in the morning, he nosed over the milk can on the veranda and lapped up the milk as it leaked out from under the tin cover. For thus helping himself to an early breakfast, while depriving

the late risers of milk for their cereal and coffee, the dog had been named Gyp. Father made friends with Gyp and one day, when he was delivering brook trout, arranged to trade the fish for the dog.

I still remember seeing Gyp tied to a bed to keep him from running away before he was accustomed to his new home. The bright way he had of showing his appreciation for the welcome we gave him in our home impressed us all. When Mother swept the floor, Gyp never had to be told to move from the place where he happened to be lying. In order not to be in the way, he always moved to a section which had already been swept.

In the winter when the cattle were likely to block the path on their return trip from the spring, Gyp showed both intelligence and leadership. A cow or ox who happened to be leading the way would often endeavor to show importance—or merely play a bovine prank on its followers—by suddenly stopping and holding up the entire line. About four o'clock every afternoon, therefore, one of us boys went to the barn to see if the cows were in their stalls for the evening milking. If they were not there, we had to go after them. Gyp observed the way this chore was done, and voluntarily took over the job without any training from us. At just the right time in the afternoon he would inspect the stables; if they were empty, he would trot up the road, break up the traffic jam, and follow the herd back to the barn.

The most brilliant act that Gyp performed occurred when Father was returning a male sheep which he had borrowed from a man who lived many miles to the north. While the ram was being led through a pasture where

there were other sheep, he made a sudden dash to join his kind, and jerked the lead rope from Father's grasp. All efforts to retrieve the dragging rope merely frightened the flock away. Without being commanded to, Gyp joined in the chase. In a moment he was among the sheep, scattering them in every direction. As they fled, the ram remained behind. Gyp did not touch the runaway, but kept dodging in front of him to impede him, so that Father could catch up and take the rope.

Gyp became an excellent hunting dog, and was especially good as a coon dog. However, unless the game appeared to be getting away, his work was mainly to tree the coons and it was in connection with this work that poor Gyp met misfortune. One night when Father was on a coon hunt and after several raccoons had been bagged, he observed what appeared to be a large coon escaping through the bushes. He directed the dog to go after it, and Gyp immediately obeyed. It was then discovered that the retreating creature in the underbrush was not a raccoon, but an extra large hedgehog. In some way, our faithful dog got so close to the hedgehog's tail that he was struck, near his heart, with sharp, penetrating spines. Father and my brother Ruel, who was with him that night, strove to save Gyp's life. Using the light of a torch, they managed to find and extract many of the piercing quills, but some of them had broken off, or had been imbedded too deeply. These quills, barbed like a fish hook, had a tendency to work toward the vital organs.

Taking turns, Father and Ruel carried Gyp in their arms, hoping that they could get him home alive; but it soon became evident that he was growing weaker and

weaker. When they were within a mile of our house there was a final faint whine of pain, and then the soft, limp body lay against Ruel's breast.

As the hunters returned, the first question Mother asked was, "Where is Gyp?" Ruel was too overcome with emotion to give an answer, so Father had to relate what had happened. "But," sobbed Mother, "just a few minutes ago I heard him scratch on the door. When I went to let him in he wasn't there." I like to think that the One who careth for all His creatures, and notes the fall of a single sparrow, permitted us this sign that the life of a noble dog is not lost forever.

MY FIRST TESTIMONIAL

I T HAS been said that the heroes of fiction are usually the third son of their father, and that we do not have more heroes because we do not have more third sons! I was the third son of my father, and was given the middle name David for the shepherd boy who slew the giant Goliath, but I never felt very heroic. Whenever I went into the bear country with Father, I kept close to him; and while *he* was hoping that we might run across some large animals, I was hoping that we wouldn't. It also gave me no pleasure to walk in solitude on dark, country roads at night. I think that my brothers had built up fear in me by scaring me in various ways when I was too young to follow them on their longer fishing trips.

In the fall, when it was time to turn pigs into pork, I

preferred to keep out of sight and hearing until all the butchering had been completed. I was seventeen before I axed my first chicken for dinner. On this occasion my sister Clara would have had to do the disagreeable job, if I had proved too chicken-hearted, so I became heroic for the moment, but not boastfully so. I did not have the same sentiment about fish, but I did make a practice of cracking their heads with a stick to end their flopping and gasping for breath.

As a child I was not very robust, and did not eat the



kind of food to make one strong. For a long time corn bread and pork nauseated me. Sweetened water seemed more appetizing than milk. To make matters worse, I fell through the boards over the cow stable and hurt my head to such an extent that I became afflicted with seizures. I did not have convulsions, but I would run wildly through the fields in great agony. One night I was found standing over the pork barrel, with the butcher knife raised as if to stab anything that might come at me. Awakening my father on another occasion, I told him that a man out in the road had brought something for us from the store; and as he started to look out the window I caught him by

his whiskers and gave them a yank. I suppose he attributed my strange behavior to some kind of nightmare.

After a few years the seizures left me, but I still suffered from frequent, severe headaches. Whenever I went to the store, or rode any distance on the jolting cart, I would return home with a headache and upset stomach. Mother would put cold cloths on my forehead and do all in her power to relieve me, but it usually took two or three days for me to recover. Deliverance from this affliction came to me in an unexpected manner.

Father had to go to Chestertown, twelve miles to the west. Since this was a two-day trip for the oxen, I was invited to go for the long ride, and also to visit with an aunt and uncle and two cousins who lived in this village. Toward night a dull pain on one side of my forehead foretold a night of great distress. Hearing of my symptom, my aunt suggested that I try her remedy, which was pheno-cafein pills. The prescribed dose was two to three pills every hour until relief came, but because of my youth she gave me half a pill. I am pleased to report that that tiny bit of medicine effected a complete cure. The next day I bought a twenty-five-cent box of the magic pellets at the drug store; and from that time I never had to fear, or endure, another headache. Whenever I felt an attack of the old torment coming on, I took a nibble of my pills. And the best of it was that instead of becoming an addict, the old malady gradually left me entirely.

It has been said that when patients recover, the Lord is praised; but when they die, the doctor is blamed. I took pains to write a letter of gratitude to the makers of

pheno-caffein, and received in reply a free box of the pills. In the box I found some printed testimonials, with mine among them. That was the first time I had a bit of my writing accepted.

CHORES AND MAKING MONEY

MANY people think of life on a farm as a serene and ideal way of living, but there is another side to be considered. Farming is as full of cares, thorns, and thistles as the land which Adam tilled after he was driven from the Garden of Eden. There are droughts, blights, hail, and frosts. Weeds spring out of the soil to choke the tender plants, and armies of insects come to plunder and devour.

Up in our rural section we learned farming the hard way. The plowing and harrowing was done with the oxen, but all the planting, hoeing and harvesting was done by hand. I began dropping corn and seed potatoes at an early age. Using a short scythe, I learned to mow while still in my early teens. We raked up the hay by hand, and pitched it onto the two-wheeled cart. The only excitement occurred when we sometimes had to hurry under a haystack to keep from getting wet during a sudden thun-

derstorm. Still, we looked forward to the harvest, the rewarding part of farming. The hope of extra-large pumpkins and big, smooth potatoes which might win a prize at the fair kept up our interest in the work.

One of my most monotonous chores was churning, which I did with an up-and-down plunger in a tall earthen crock. In the cold weather there seemed to be a tribe of obstinate witches who kept the butter from coming. The only way to beat them was by following the suggestion of Robert Burns: "Whether striving, suffering, or forbearing, miracles can be wrought by persevering."

Another tiresome job was turning the grindstone. Our land, if not founded on a rock, was at least inlaid with them, and they were forever getting in the way of scythes and axes. I have heard that when the lady who much later became my wife was a little girl, she took a hammer and badly mutilated her father's grindstone. I had the same inclination, but never had the courage to show how I felt. Even when one has the improved type of grindstone which operates by foot power, there are still difficulties. The lesson that it is much better to take time to sharpen your tools than it is to go to work with dull ones remained with me, and later in an essay contest on the meaning of education, I won first prize by illustrating with the old grindstone.

Since our wealth was our cattle and crops and the resources around us in the mountains and woods, ready cash was sometimes at a minimum. However, we never had to go hungry, and although our furnishings were modest they were adequate, and replaced when necessary. In fact, I recall a time when Mother called attention to

the lamentable state of our silverware by placing a badly worn spoon at the head of the table. When Father saw it beside his plate, he picked up the spoon, carried it to the door, and threw it as far as he could. Soon after that he brought home a shiny set of knives, forks, and spoons.

It was always a special occasion when Father got a check for his furs. He had these checks cashed at the village store where he had to accept a lot of change. When he got home, and after supper and the devotions were finished, he would spread his money out on the table for an extra counting. Father not only shared some of the coins with us, but liked to give Mother money for a new dress or bright material.

As soon as we children were old enough, we were taught to earn money for ourselves; and though paper and magazine routes did not exist in our mountain district, there were some interesting substitutes. We climbed all the mountains that surrounded us, looking for the sweet, juicy blueberries which were so good for pies and puddings, and which we could also sell for ten cents a quart. The wider views that met our eyes as we ascended the several peaks were also an exhilarating reward, and as I looked out over the many mountains, lakes, ponds, and streams, I felt an urge to see the things that lay beyond them.

As we traveled from one mountain ledge to another, we frequently saw the places where bears had been feeding on the berries, and on one trip my eldest brother and I disturbed a sleeping bear. As the animal stood on his hind legs to see who was encroaching on his wild domain, we came face to face. But only for a moment. Even though

the beast had the right of possession, he seemed more than willing to leave. My brother hastened his departure by throwing a pail with such force that the bear did not turn out for small shrubbery, but broke bushes down in his straight-line rush away from us.

Father encouraged us to plant and tend an extra patch of potatoes, which we could sell to earn money for our winter clothing. We were so far from the market that we never acquired much wealth for our labor. With a one-man saw which had been presented to me, I cut and split a cord of white birch wood for use in a kitchen range, but the man who bought it was so slow in paying that I had to take my pay in peanuts, on the installment plan, as I called at his small store.

We three brothers imitated our father by learning to trap small game; and the merchant at the store once remarked that if the Roberts boys needed a shirt or a pair of overalls, they brought in the pelt of a skunk or a mink to swap for the article.

We caught and sold trout during the summer months. And at times we kept them alive in a pail of water to sell to people who had fishponds. In such cases the poor fish had to be caught twice.

When I needed a Fourth Reader for the fall term of school, I caught over a hundred small frogs, which I sold to fishermen for bait. The trip to the store was a memorable one, for not only was I to have the coveted book, but I was to pay for it myself. This was my first step in the process of education, and it was a rather wobbly step for brother Ruel and I drove down the lake road with a very ancient horse and crude homemade buggy. After every

step the horse seemed to have to meditate a while before taking the next one, and on our return trip darkness overtook us. This horse evidently believed that the night was made for sleeping, for when we were within two miles of home he lay down by the side of the road and called it a day. Ruel and I had to walk home; but I had my book, and though it had been impregnated with the aroma of tobacco smoke from the general store, it smelled and looked good to me.



I also had a brief career as a salesman at the little village then called Bartonville, down at the outlet of Brant Lake, where the general store was located. Sister Clara had bought some celluloid, from which she made some very fine napkin rings. Fastened as they were with pink ribbon, they had such appeal to the eyes of the ladies that I sold my entire stock in one day. Since I had called at all the houses and supplied the market, the business ended almost as soon as it started.

Ginseng roots formed another source of income for

us. This plant, so highly prized by the Chinese as a cure-all, grew in our woods and in many places round about. In a way, looking for ginseng is like prospecting for gold. We loved to wander through the woods, looking for the plant with the golden tubers. At one time ginseng was very abundant in the Brant Lake area, but forest fires had destroyed much of it by the time I came along. What was left, though, was all the more valuable. One pound of the dried, man-shaped root was worth three or four dollars, and eventually carried a much higher price. I think we could have become rich had we seen the possibilities of cultivating the plant and giving up space for it. The discouraging feature is that it takes about seven years for a seed to produce a sizable tuber.

Once when I was with Father I gathered seed which I planted in our woods, but a number of years later someone found it and dug it all up, without planting more seed. It was that attitude of grabbing all one could reach, without thinking of conservation, which helped to make ginseng scarce.

Even when he did not have a bear to skin, Father made his inspection trips profitable by taking time to search for ginseng. When he found more than he could dig before dark, he would sleep in the woods and finish the work in the morning. If it looked like rain, he would cut enough boughs to lean against a large fallen tree for shelter; and when he wanted to make a fire, he could find tinder in the hollow butt of such a tree. Once, when he was looking for a suitable place for his lodging, he noticed some fresh earth at the end of a tree which the wind had blown down, and discovered a newly-made den which a

bear had dug under the upturned roots. Gathering an armful of dry leaves to serve as clean sheets, Father enjoyed a good night in the bear's bedroom. Fortunately, the bear must have spent the night out. In the morning Father dug up the rest of the valuable roots and returned home with a big bag of them.

I can vouch for Father's peaceful slumber in the forest, for one night when I was with him we slept in an open shanty which porcupines were gnawing to pieces. We had no lantern, but judging by the noises, the animals were converging upon us from all directions. The frogs were croaking in the nearby creek, owls answered one another from a distance, and hedgehogs kept up their persistent scraping on the few remaining boards of the shanty. I must confess to a sleepless night, but if Father heard these forest sounds at all, they were a soothing symphony which lulled him into blissful repose.

Later a man who had come up from the city to do some fishing in the vicinity was camping in this same dilapidated shack, and had a frightening experience. He thought the owls were wolves coming to attack him; and furthermore, as he excitedly explained to Father the next morning, a lumberman apparently bereft of his reason had been driving oxen on one of the mountains during the night. He explained that the lumberman must have been skidding logs, for he continually called to his oxen: "Whoa, whoa-ho!"

"I must have caught a bear," said Father. "That's the kind of noise they make when they're in distress."

The city man, fearing bears even more than phantom lumberjacks, remained close to his camp until he saw

Father returning with a bearskin on his back. With relief and delight he accepted Father's gift of bear steak which could be shared with friends who might have teased him if he had only an empty basket to show for the fishing trip.

It so happened that our own property provided me with one more source for earning money. The brook which wound its way through the length of our farm was not only interesting because of the traces of former beaver dams and the pools where we caught the speckled trout, but also because of a peculiar rock formation. Beginning at a waterfall a few hundred feet back of our house, and turning at a right angle, the brook descended into a miniature canyon with rapids and a natural stone bridge, and then disappeared underground. A little farther down were two round, well-like openings where we could hear the water rushing below. We often took good-sized fish from this place. On the west side of the rise the stream bubbled forth again and flowed on toward Brant Lake.

High on the steep hillside, above the place where the brook vanished, I had observed a cavity among the rocks. So far as I remember, no one had expressed any curiosity about this, and since it looked to me very much like a bear's den, I kept away from it until I was about thirteen years old. That summer a young minister who liked to hike and fish stopped at our house. Since there is boldness in numbers, I told him about the mysterious cave and we agreed to explore it.

With a lantern we crawled between some narrow ledges, followed a downward fissure and were soon in a large room with stalagmites and stalactites. About two

hundred feet from the entrance of the cave, our progress was blocked by a dark pond of water.

No treasures or Indian relics were found, but later something of real financial value developed for me. People who spent their summer vacations at the lake heard about the cave and came to see it. I served as guide, and while I did not charge for my services, I nevertheless received many pieces of silver. With an eye for business, I put up a sign over our front door: CAMP CAVES. On the whole, I had no regrets about looking into this hole among the rocks.

SCHOOL DAYS AND DISTRACTIONS

BETWEEN two trout streams which flow into the head of Brant Lake, and just where a second dead-end dirt road leads up the valley, stood our weather-beaten schoolhouse, a one-room structure where all grades were taught. Attached to one side of the building was a woodshed, usually well-filled with seasoned birch, beech, and maple. As if to protect us from the cold north and east winds, seven small mountains curved around in the shape of a horseshoe, for good luck—or, as some felt, an oxbow to represent service. First, Second, and Third Brothers were on the east side, a mountain for each of the Roberts boys. Thunderbolt stood in the center of the bend, then extending around to the north were Stevenson, Chub-pond, and Big Hill. To the south, surrounded by lower hills, lay the shining water of the lake.

If the schoolhouse had ever been painted, not a trace of red remained when I began to seek learning there. But

reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, geography, physiology, and American History were taught year after year. We never graduated, but kept going over the same fundamentals, progressing through the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Reader books until we, or our parents, felt we had learned all there was to learn before taking up full-time work on the farm or in the nearby towns.

The location of our school must have been conducive to learning, for though our teachers had little more education than that provided by a district school, there was no Johnny among us who was not taught to read. In my own case, I marvel that I absorbed from my books and the recitations of others the little knowledge which has remained with me from those days. At that time, we did our arithmetic and wrote lists of words and sentences on slates. We took these to the teacher for correction, after which the slates were cleaned for further use. At school the blackboards were used in the same way. Paper would have been too expensive.

Our home-study work during the long winter evenings was done by the light of candles. Our parents, fearing that kerosene lamps might break, or explode and set the house on fire, were reluctant to make a change. They thought that candles were safer to have on the table, to carry upstairs when we went to bed, and to show the way to vegetable bins and shelves of preserves in the cellar. Even after my sisters brought us oil lamps from the city, Father preferred to read his Bible by candlelight. At times it was my task to help make the candles. Long cotton wicks, tied to small, round sticks, were inserted in hollow forms, and the melted fat of sheep was poured in to

harden into what were known as tallow candles. Gas and electric bills were unknown on our road.

During the spring and summer, the urge to go fishing seemed much stronger than the urge to learn arithmetic or spelling. Moreover, at times nature itself conspired against my education. As I looked out the schoolhouse window I frequently saw a fish hawk circle over the lake, make a sudden dive, and then, with some difficulty, bear his prize aloft.

Further outside distraction was offered by many red-winged blackbirds, orioles, and scarlet tanagers which found the shrubbery along the swampy shore land an ideal feeding ground and nesting place. A major diversion occurred one day when all of us were permitted to go out in the yard to see the body of a big bear which a neighbor had dispatched as it was swimming across the lake.

Recently when we asked our grandson, who had just begun to attend kindergarten, what he liked best about school, he answered, "I like the retesses." At our country school, we too enjoyed the recesses, when we played tag, three-old-cat and four-old-cat baseball. Personally, I liked fishing better. Playing Post Office might have been as interesting as fishing, but the truth was that up our way nobody dared to kiss anybody—at least not when someone might be watching.

Occupied as we were with farming, making maple sugar, fishing, trapping, hunting and going to school in the little building which never got its red coat of paint, there were few dull moments in our lives at Brant Lake. We did take time out for jumping on the hay, climbing

trees, playing hide-and-seek, and swimming. Our best place for swimming was a half-mile down the road at the Bentley farm, where a sandy beach was easy on our feet, but there was a swimming hole in our brook which we made deeper and wider by means of a sod dam. It was fun to do this, and also to remove the obstruction afterwards to cause a miniature flood.

When a fair was held at Pottersville in the fall of the year, we had a few rides on the merry-go-round, but for the most part we found riding on a load of hay or on a sled through the deep snow to gather sap more satisfying. Brother Ruel, at the age of nine, conceived the idea of hitching his sled to the tail of a young ox. The sudden acceleration and the terrific spill which resulted caused him to lose all confidence in this method of transportation, and he was content to take the slower rides with the rest of us.

The nearest country church was some seven miles distant, too far to go behind slow oxen. Father, who was an indefatigable walker, attended church quite often, but the rest of us only in the summertime when ministers came to our schoolhouse to hold services. During the summer we also maintained a Sunday School, of which I was once appointed the superintendent at the age of twelve.

But unless there was a Sunday School to attend, Sundays seemed extra long. We all were too full of vitality to enjoy being quiet and sitting still. Walks along the brook and through the woods broke the monotony, and we were allowed to crack nuts and pop corn. Since Jesus and His disciples walked through a corn field, shucking and eating

the kernels as they went along, it was not considered wrong for us to do something similar. We were grateful for the liberal ruling of our parents on this point. I suppose, however, that we were not behaving in an overly pious manner when we pretended that the exploding corn was ammunition in a fierce battle for our independence. I still recommend the use of popcorn as a safe way for small children to celebrate the Fourth of July. They can fire off these crackers and eat them, and no one is hurt.

Checkers and dominoes were occasionally played during the long, winter evenings, but "Authors" was the only card game allowed.

Christmas in our valley was observed with simplicity. In our stockings we found such articles as hickory nuts, candy, and a bit of money, but we felt rich nonetheless. After all, riches are a matter of the heart. The tin elephant on wheels which an older sister gave me one Christmas pleased me as much as a new automobile did thirty years later. And I have a clear recollection of joyful anticipation when some member of the family confided to me that Mother had a special Christmas present for me. After peeking into things in vain to find it, I was not disappointed when I received a pair of bright suspenders, proof that I was on my way to manhood.

A community Christmas Tree was put up in the schoolhouse, and the various families would bring their gifts. At the right moment Old Santa brought his reindeer to a stop outside and Austin Ross, a Civil War veteran with a natural Santa face, would burst into the room to start the festivities. A few Christmas songs would be sung

and some of the children called on for recitations. I was always expected to rattle off some verses which had been laboriously memorized.

Aside from the community Christmas tree, there were not many social events to be enjoyed in our neighborhood. Occasionally we had a community picnic, and with the coming of the summer people to Brant Lake, we were sometimes treated to Fourth-of-July fireworks. A man who owned a beautiful house on the shore of the lake generally invited the whole neighborhood to a lawn party, where paper balloons floated up toward the sky. Fire rockets, Roman candles, and other dazzling illuminations were discharged over the water. Even though we had had a long, hard day in the hay field, Father was always willing to hitch the oxen to our bumpy, two-wheeled hay cart and take us to the July Fourth celebration.

Although very strict in his religious beliefs, Father was quite liberal in some ways. He not only permitted us to attend the county fair, where various worldly things were on display, but he even entered his oxen in a race and won first prize. Of course, I was fascinated by the gambling machines, and ventured a nickel, which I lost—but I kept this secret to myself. I kept quiet also about some rank cigars which I won by throwing balls at a dodging clown's head. The punishment that I brought on myself by smoking the cigars was severe enough.

When a circus which was booked for Chestertown, twelve miles away, gave its first performance, my older brother and I were there. We had obtained Father's consent on the ground that it would be educational to see the elephant. However, considering the side show and all,

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When a circus which was booked for Chestertown, twelve miles away, gave its first performance, my older brother and I were there. We had obtained Father's consent on the ground that it would be educational to see the elephant. However, considering the side show and all,

we saw a great deal more than the elephant. The ease and grace with which men and women, scantily dressed in tights, turned somersaults and performed on the trapeze, and the skill of the cowboys in roping cattle, put ideas in my head.

On the first convenient day after returning from the circus, brother Ruel and I shut ourselves in the barn, piled up some hay, climbed up to a beam, and began our acrobatic training. I do not know just how Ruel came out, for he declined to tell. I was equally reticent about what happened to me in my attempt to spin around in the air. It may be sufficient to say the first-magnitude stars which I discovered as my knees collided with my forehead convinced me that swinging bars and acrobatic turns in mid-air might be a hard way to earn a living.

Not to be entirely disillusioned, though, I decided to try my hand at the cowboy tricks. For convenient practice just at this time, we had a sleek, black heifer. I made a slipknot in a rope, threw the loop at the frightened creature, and, after several tries, succeeded in lassoing her around the neck. As I held to the rope she bolted for her freedom, keeled over on her head, and came up with a broken horn. Mortified that I had marred the appearance of the beautiful young cow, and fearful of what Father might think of my awkward prank, all my visions of becoming a circus celebrity faded away.

Lest anyone think that I lacked the perseverance which is essential to success, I should mention my experience in learning to ride a bicycle. When my brother John rode home from Vermont on the first bicycle that we had seen on our rocky road, I was determined to learn to ride

the thing. However, even though the seat was lowered as far down as it could be, my legs were not long enough. When the pedals were up I could push them down for a couple of inches, but then had to wait until they came up again. This maneuver hardly provided enough momentum for balancing the vehicle, but by mounting and pushing off from a big rock by the side of the road I could ride a few yards. Always, just as I would get started on a slight down grade, the sprocket chain, or one of the solid rubber tires, would come off. Without exaggeration I can say that I must have fallen into the dusty road a thousand times. Eventually, of course, I learned to balance the high and heavy bicycle, and experienced the thrill of triumph.

By using foot pressure on the front tire for braking purposes, I coasted down the hills to school. At times the balky bike brought me humiliation, as when the chain came off the sprocket on a bridge and both boy and bicycle fell into the brook, but at other times I was the envy of my schoolmates as they ran along beside me, and great was my glory.

FISHING: THE FAVORITE PASTIME

W

E BOYS thought our father showed wisdom at its best when, on rainy days, he told us to quit work in the cornfield and go fishing. Rain was good for the crops, and the fish were easier to catch on such days. Even the trip through the wet brush was a reminder of the treat ahead, for we knew the brooks and pools where the best fish were likely to be, and Father had taught us how to catch them.

We progressed rapidly from the twine and bent-pin stage to that of the stronger lines and steel hooks, and became ardent fishermen. We loved best to fish for the lusty trout. In accordance with Father's instruction, we learned how to use long ash fishpoles, and to approach the pools quietly, taking care to see that we cast no reflection on the water to frighten the fish.

On rainy days it did not take us much time to get from the fields of growing things to our favorite brooks.

Getting our tackle together was a simple process. Hastily we dug angleworms, put our fish lines—which were wound on pieces of dry corncobs—in our pockets, and started off through the woods and over the hills. On our way we cut fishing rods to which we tied our lines when we reached the brook. Sometimes we spent an entire day fishing in a soaking rain, with water running down our backs, arms, and legs, but we always returned home with good strings of speckled trout and great appetites.



As Brant Lake was only a half mile from our house, we also did considerable lake-fishing for pickerel, bass, perch, and bullheads. During the early spring, when the pickerel came near the shore to sun themselves, we speared them or shot them with a rifle. I never learned the art of spearing fish, but one day when the lake had receded, leaving a sizable pickerel in a small pool from which there was no escape, I thought I would have a chance to try my luck. At that moment the poor fish, frightened at my approach, made a dash for freedom and

came to a flopping stop on dry ground, several feet from the water. Not having the heart to impale the fish in his position of disadvantage, I picked it up and carried it home intact. So far as I know, this was a new method of landing fish.

During the long winter months we added to our food supply by fishing through the ice. This was not all fun, for we frequently had to cut holes through ice that was from eighteen inches to two feet thick. It was no boy's job to make eight or more such holes, but for some reason we put more zest into that kind of work than we usually did in chopping wood. When the holes were ready we used a small hook to catch perch which, in turn, we put on a larger hook for pickerel bait. We then continued fishing through the same holes. After all the lines had been set, it was interesting to watch the various flags as they moved, now slightly as the perch slowly swam about, and now more actively when the pickerel came near to frighten them. While the average weight of the pickerel was from two to three pounds, we were sure that there were much larger ones to be caught.

I was ten years old when I did my first fishing through the ice. My brother Ruel was eager to try out some new tackle that he had bought. Although he could see that I was anxious to go with him he did not offer to take me, thinking me too young to begin ice-fishing. In addition he had succeeded in getting some minnows, which were thought to be irresistible bait, and he didn't want to share them with his inexperienced kid brother.

However, luck was with me on this particular mild Monday. Monday was the day when Mother did her wash-

ing, and it was Ruel's job to get the water from the brook. He was in such a hurry to get his lines set that he offered to give me three of his smallest bait fish and let me go with him if I would do his work for him. The offer was accepted, and the tubs were filled in record time.

Some time previously, in anticipation of this happy event, I had tied together several short pieces to make myself a line long enough for the deep-water angling. To this I had fastened a three-way hook, and so was ready to take my share of the big ones as soon as the weather got warmer.

When I reached the lake I selected a spot quite a distance from the favorite location, which was already occupied by Ruel's six strong lines. I hacked a hole through the thick ice, put a minnow on my hook, and waited for a hungry fish to bite. Since my patience was not quickly rewarded, I walked over to see Ruel. He was not having much luck.

On my return to my improvised tip-up I found all the slack line pulled into the water. The stick to which the end of the line had been fastened was drawn across the hole. When I took hold of the line and felt the heavy weight on it, my excitement was unbounded. But I was afraid that some parts of the knotted string might break with the stress and, moreover, since I felt no lively jerks, it was possible that I might have only weeds on my hook. I kept hauling in and finally a big mottled head came up through the rather small opening, and I had my fish safely out on the ice. Loud shouts of triumph brought my brother to me at top speed. Ruel could hardly believe his

eyes, for there before us lay a pickerel—perhaps more technically a pike—exactly three feet long.

At my age, I was not tall enough to keep my fish's tail from dragging on the snow, but I insisted nevertheless on carrying him all the way back to our house. Pride must have gleamed on me like the morning sun when I held my catch up to be admired and announced, "Look, I caught myself a fish."

Some four miles over the mountains to the north of our house lay an enchanted lake, named after and pronounced like the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt. Perhaps the mountain, towering beside it somewhat in the shape of a pyramid, suggested the name. Many exciting encounters with bears occurred under the cliffs of Pharaoh Mountain and its companion to the east, Old Treadway. However, we Roberts boys were mainly interested in the excellent trout of this deep, cool, secluded, and picturesque body of water. Here in this two-mile-long and mile-wide lake were the kind of fish that we liked best, and, in addition, they were usually larger in size and of superior, pink-meated color.

One man whom we knew claimed to have taken a five-pound brookie there one windy day, and, occasionally, others of two and three pounds. Father was a worthy follower of Izaak Walton in fishing brooks, but he had never learned how to catch trout in Pharaoh Lake. Many times when I went to a bear trap with him, we spent a few hours trolling there, but never caught a single fish. My older brothers had no better luck. Although Mother

would ask us to bring her some of these special trout, we could never seem to get them to bite. Such a situation for otherwise respectable anglers had to be changed.

I had no difficulty in persuading a relative to join me on a camping trip one summer during which we hoped to discover the secret of catching those coveted fish. Loading our bicycles with such supplies as we could carry, and also afford, we pedaled to the head of Brant Lake. Then, pushing and pulling the bicycles over the rocky remains of an old logging road, we traveled another five miles to the outlet of Pharaoh. At this point we took a boat, for which we had made arrangement, and rowed another mile up the creek to an ideal camping place called Watch Rock.

After supper we expected to lie down to pleasant slumber on the sturdy and unyielding primeval mattresses, but sleep did not come easily. In order to eliminate weight we had brought only thin cotton blankets, which were easily penetrated by the crisp mountain air. The only way to endure the discomfort was to get up and keep the fire going. Imitating the Indians, we made a small fire and hovered near it, catching short naps between the shivers.

Up with the sun, we went forth to attempt what so few people had been able to accomplish. At first, with not another person in sight, we trolled around the shores and out in the middle of the lake, but caught nothing but sunfish. Eventually we saw another camper, a sun-tanned and wrinkled Irishman who explained to us that he had come out to get a fish or two for his dinner. Mr. McGuire, for this was his name, was not very talkative, and apparently not anxious to reveal any tricks that he knew

about catching fish; and when we inquired about the trail up the mountain where we might get some blueberries, he was equally vague. He said, "I've been up, and taken others up, but I never go in the same place once."

As we were watching the veteran fisherman we saw him drop his oars suddenly, seize his fishpole, and give a long, swift pull on it. Having set the hook, he pulled in his line carefully by hand, and at the side of his boat used a net to take in a sizable trout. We saw also that he had a heavier sinker than we had brought with our tackle, which indicated that he had been trolling his bait down in deep, cool water.

It didn't take us long to remedy our failure to fish farther below the surface. Down by the outlet of the lake, we found some big nails which we used instead of lead. Luck began to come our way. We caught three trout for supper. The next day we landed five, and the following day, eight. Mr. McGuire, not ready to give us too much credit, explained our success with these words: "Sometimes the trout like nails better than they do lead." Undaunted by this dour appraisal, we came back on subsequent trips with plenty of lead sinkers, and have been catching our full share of these wonderful fish ever since.

The sheer joy of camping under the pines and among the cedars of any one of the three islands of Pharaoh was a good vacation in itself. The work of building or repairing the fireplace, finding and arranging flat stones for tables and seats, and gathering wood, both for cooking and for a campfire in the evening, was more like play than labor.

In the earlier days, pine stumps stood everywhere, like

gravestones in a cemetery, reminding one of the great trees which had once crashed to the earth. The stumps themselves were no dwarfs, but two and three feet in diameter and some of them five feet high, having been cut down by men who stood on deep packed snow. These remnants of forest giants, with roots clinging to stones and ledges like the tentacles of a huge octopus, made excellent firewood. To entertain friends on a dark evening cheered by such a fire, and then serve an early breakfast of trout, griddlecakes and maple syrup, was an experience long and pleasantly remembered.

If I seem to be approaching fantasy in calling this lake with the ancient Egyptian name "enchanted," I will mention an unusual phenomenon in justification. It occurred on an afternoon when I was fishing with a friend who had never been to Pharaoh before, and who doubted that we could catch anything. But the wind was just right, and our luck the best that I had ever known. We pulled in trout as if they were on a waiting list.

Presently, coming down from the north, a thin column of rain appeared, and then another from the east. As I heard the sound of raindrops on the trees, I began rowing toward our tent on Little Island. I hoped that the steady west wind, which was bending the sheets of rain backward, might prevail and keep us from getting wet. However, the roar of the approaching storm encouraged me to quicken my speed. It was fortunate that I did this, for as we reached shelter the currents of air which had been coming from three directions converged on the lake and gave us an exhibition of something which I had never

seen before—and have not seen since—The Dance of the Mistmaids.

In a space about the size of a merry-go-round, liquid sprays rose and fell and revolved rapidly in a mad pursuit of each other. The fantastic dance lasted no more than half a minute, but in this short time the water was churned into foamy waves which expanded in widening circles to cover all the lake and wash all the shores. I do not know how our old flat boat would have stood up against the freakish wind and waves, and was satisfied to watch the show which nature provided for us from a safe observation point.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

THE Good Neighbor policy was in full operation up our way seventy-five years ago. When new comforters were to be made for winter use, the ladies came together to sit and sew and talk around the quilting frames. Now and then someone would take out her snuff box. Conversations covered such important matters as the number of jars of blueberries, blackberries, and other preserves put up for winter use. Ideas were exchanged about the making of mince pies, sausage meat, and the smoking of hams. As the womenfolk of that day did not see each other as frequently as they might now, there was much friendly curiosity concerning household matters and neighborly doings.

Of course, when children were not around the ladies spoke in low voices of the stork and when he might be making his next trip to our valley, but keen little ears often heard what was said. Doctors were never called on for

their skill in directing baby traffic, for local midwives were more than willing to help each other. Sometimes the quiet of the night would be disturbed by the rapid steps of a horse and the rattle of a buggy past our door; and the next day we would learn of a new occupant for the old wooden cradle. To the credit of the midwives, it should be recorded that the thirty-three tiny tots who came to live in the four houses on what was erroneously called a "dead-end" road were all born healthy and husky. The mothers fared just as well.

Back in those days men helped one another put up the framework of their buildings; and the cooperative efforts, called "bees," led to such a friendly spirit that the hard lifting and pulling went easily. Trees that had been cut down and hewed into long, heavy beams and girders were matched together with amazing skill. And the work of the women, in providing a feast, fully matched the feats of the men. The oven-baked pork and beans, chicken and berry pies, honey and maple syrup afforded a banquet that supported both muscle and morale. Bill Bentley, who was present when our barn took form, confessed to me seventy years afterward that he ate so much honey and bear meat on that occasion that he had to get down on the ground and roll to ease his stomach.

With the nearest grocery store seven miles away, it was not uncommon for a family to run out of sugar, salt, spices, flour, or tea just as unexpected company came. However, it was quite in order to send one of the children to the next house, which might be a half-mile away, to borrow.

Holding firmly that unless our righteousness exceeds

that of the Pharisees we will in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Father believed that good works should accompany faith. He shared his animal oils and other home remedies with anyone in need without charge. If anyone happened to be seen going by our house at meal-time, Father would hail him to come in and eat with us. Some wives might have been annoyed at Father's hospitality, for at times there was considerably less than five loaves and two fishes to share. However, Mother always did her part. Canned preserves, honey, and maple sweets could be brought from the pantry at a moment's notice, and thus she performed her own miracle of multiplying food for hungry mouths. From experience, Father had learned to have confidence in the ability of the Lord and Mother to provide in times of necessity.

On one occasion, when our supper had long been finished, a man and his son arrived from Vermont to go on a bear hunt with Father. Mother cheerfully prepared a late supper for the two visitors, while Father entertained them with stories of his experiences. Though I had heard these stories many times, my ears were as attentive as those of the elderly visitor, who expressed his interest by frequently saying, "I swan," and "I want t'know," in a low incredulous voice. Within a few days the father and son from Vermont were able to return home with substantial proof that they had been with a skillful hunter, for Father helped them bag a big black bear.

During the summer many vacationists came to our house to see the white bear skin and to hear bear stories. Father not only obliged but also talked to them about the Bible and the love of God. As proof of his friendliness, he

made it a practice to offer his guests honey or pieces of maple sugar.

Father's good will and sense of brotherhood went even further. A man who was addicted to strong drink came to live on a farm that adjoined ours, and when an infant child died in his home, he asked Father to conduct a funeral service since there were no regular preachers



close by. A few days later, the bereaved man visited us to talk about heaven. He was always eager to converse on religious themes after he had been drinking. His idea was that the hayfields in heaven would be so free from stones that one could mow all day without dulling one's scythe. He also visualized acres of corn and potatoes so clear of weeds and pests that farmers could sit in the shade all day and watch things grow. He was sure, too,

that there would be no more debts and taxes. Because of his drinking and lazy attitudes, this man was no credit to the community, but when he became ill Father and a group of neighbors saw to it that he had enough to eat, and cut up a big pile of wood for him.

Some years later, when I was camping with my family at Pharaoh Lake, a Mr. Bixbie, who frequently came over from Lake George to fish for the Pharaoh trout, rowed over to our island to leave us some extra treats and supplies, as was the custom when anyone was going out. As we talked he said that he remembered my father very well. He explained that once when the Bixbie family was spending a vacation at Pharaoh, they had forgotten to include potatoes with their supplies. Father, who happened to hear of this, walked the ten miles, coming and going, over the rugged mountain trail to bring back a peck of potatoes. It was one of Father's typical acts of kindness, and it was good to know that it had been so well remembered.

BIBLE PROBLEMS

SOME of our teachers endeavored to teach us a few songs, but beyond being able to repeat the words in a singsong fashion, I am sure that none of us became musical. The only time that we heard an organ was when someone brought one from the village for the funeral service of an outstanding person. For a long time I associated all organ music with funerals, and the louder it was the more mournful it sounded to me. To be sure, we children owned a few mouth organs among us, but we did not know how to play them; we merely used them when we felt like making some extra noise.

Mother sang at times, as she did her work about the house, and I thought her voice was beautiful; but I was told that the only time Father was ever heard to break forth in song was when his first son was born. At that time someone overheard him trying to sing "Happy Day." I must have inherited my musical disability from my

father, for notes and tunes have no meaning for me. To overcome this lack, I once visited a teacher of singing who, after trying me out on a few notes and finding that I did not have the slightest conception of tone, gave me up as impossible. I must have been in the class with Adam, of whom Mark Twain has Eve reflect: "It is not because of his singing that I love him, for when he sings it sours the milk."

Although weak in music, and with no library within many miles of us, we did have the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Green Mountain Boys*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, *Memoirs of General Grant*, and the two volumes by Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone* and *In Darkest Africa*. As a gift from sister Anna, *The Christian Herald* came to our house every week from the early nineties on.

As soon as I was able to read well enough, Mother encouraged me to read aloud the sermons by the famous Doctor Talmadge. Undoubtedly it was these sermons, and an occasional one by D. L. Moody, that first gave me the idea of becoming a minister. So deeply was I impressed by one sermon that I went out into the pasture and endeavored to reproduce it. Selecting a rocky ledge for my pulpit, and the cattle and sheep for my congregation, I announced the text, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs or thistles?" and proceeded to emphasize the main thoughts of this challenging theme. No converts resulted, but I became more fully convinced that the good fruit of the Bible proves this book to be God's special message to man.

As stated before, with two chapters a day for our

instruction and inspiration, we lived with the Bible. Indeed, it was not Father's fault if we did not meditate upon its precepts day and night, and make it a light to our pathway. From the time we were old enough to sit in chairs we were taught to remain quiet while the sacred book was being read. Likewise, after the readings, we were trained to ignore the rough knots in the hard spruce floor as we kneeled during the lengthy prayers. Even if Father returned from his trapping after we had all retired for the night, he never failed to read and pray aloud before going to bed. When urgent tasks had to be attended to in the morning, we got up earlier than usual, so that there would be plenty of time for our devotions. In this methodical manner, we proceeded from Genesis to Revelation, from the Garden of Eden and the sin of man to the vision of the glorious city of God.

Not considering it sufficient that we listen to Father's slow reading and frequent comments, we were encouraged to read the Holy Book for ourselves. As soon as we were able to read, we were presented with small, fine-print Bibles, which we read from cover to cover. As for myself, I think that I read my black-bound, pink-edged pages from beginning to end at least twice. While it was tedious to pronounce some of the longer words and to blaze a trail through lengthy chronology, I came to think of the experience as a trip through a desert in which I found occasional oases with bright springs of water and fruitful trees. Eventually, of course, I came to the richer portions which were like promised lands flowing with milk and honey; and I enjoyed them all the more because of the contrasts.

Father believed that the Bible is like a road map, revealing God's will for our future, and that not a single Bible prophecy will fail. Before the First World War, it was comfortable to believe that the human race was making progress toward a goal of peace and good will. At a church service, when an earnest young pastor explained that God had things working so well in the world that miracles are no longer needed, Father did not agree with such optimistic predictions. He expected the terrible wars which have been fought in recent years, and his grounds were the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. . . . evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

At the same time that he predicted the destruction which hangs over us today, Father held that God's people should not be anxious or fearful, for the Psalmist has said: "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

Years ago Father predicted that men would learn to fly. He based his convictions on the words of Isaiah: "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?"

He had read also from the Prophet Nahum: "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings," and he believed this passage foretold the invention of the auto-

mobile, with its marvelous speed and gleaming headlights. Father had no prejudice about riding in an auto; and though he had done most of his riding behind oxen, he showed no fear when we once rode quite rapidly in a Model T Ford over a bumpy road to catch a train.

Although I never heard my parents express a single doubt about the authority of the Bible, the existence of God, and everlasting life in heaven, I wondered about the how and why of all things. One morning, after hearing the story of creation read to us, I asked, "Who made God?" When it was explained that God is "from everlasting to everlasting," I found this difficult to comprehend. I knew that we planted seed to raise our corn and potatoes, but I could not see how anything could grow when there was no one to plant the seed. It occurred to me, though, that some things such as fungi, which I had seen growing on decaying trees, seemed to spring forth of their own accord, so I reasoned that God might have come into being in a similar way. I did not at that time consider the mystery of the trees themselves.

At a later date I inquired about the origin of the devil, who has made such a havoc in the home and church and state. I was told that once upon a time, when the angels were free to do good or evil, some of them rebelled against God, and their leader became the archenemy of God and man. Knowing that my father caught destructive bears, I wanted to know why God did not catch the devil and put an end to his evil doings. My father replied that since man was created in the image of God—with freedom to choose obedience or disobedience, good or evil—it was his work to cooperate with God until every enemy has

been cast out and destroyed. Not being able to realize fully the value of struggle, I was skeptical of the idea that it is for our own best interest to have the devil around to tempt and trip us at every turn. The age-old, baffling problem of evil was not easily solved for me, but it made me think.

The Bible not only raises many questions about the universe, life, death, eternity, and God, but it also suggests how those questions can be answered. It teaches us to study, to seek, to practice, and to persevere until we know the truth—and the freedom which the truth brings. Moreover, it gives us certain rules, such as the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments, to guide us along the way. When we encounter people who do not see eye-to-eye with us, we are not to beat out their brains, but, realizing that there may be a few beams in our own eyes, aim to be of greater service to one another by a kindly exchange of thoughts. There is a real point to the story of the Negro clergyman who, when asked to explain the difference between the cherubim and seraphim which he had so eloquently mentioned in his sermon, paused only a moment to collect his wits, and then replied, "There was a difference between them but they made it up."

If there are two sides to all questions, I had a chance to hear them presented when neighbors and friends engaged in spirited Biblical discussions at our house. Whenever the exchanges of ideas in our home threatened to become like the wind-swept sea of Galilee, Mother had a way of bringing peace and calm to the troubled waters. By serving her famous golden-crusts rolls and a dish of

fragrant honey, she could turn a tense situation into a feast of happy harmony. The resulting fellowship made it easy for all to agree that, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

After hearing the Bible read so regularly, and as I began reading it for myself, I was impressed with the idea that I ought to take my stand as a Christian, but it was no easy task for me to do this. I was at times on the verge of making a prayer immediately after Father concluded his very comprehensive morning prayer; but, conscious of the presence of my older brothers who did not pray, I always lost my courage. On my way to the hay field one morning, I confessed to Father that I should like to be a Christian. He quoted me the words of Jesus, "Believe that ye receive, and ye shall have." However, as simple as the way of faith should be to us, it seemed baffling to me. Father was undoubtedly acting on the principle that the best way to teach someone to swim is to throw him into deep water where he will have to swim or sink. There may be something to this theory, but when someone tried it with me I came near drowning, and remained fearful of deep water. I had to learn to swim gradually in shallow water. The way of faith also had to be grasped by me in low speed. My experience was also much like that of Bunyan's pilgrim who found the way to Mt. Zion beset with miry sloughs, steep hills, dark valleys, doubting castles, and a host of hostile forces.

My older sisters claimed that it was easy for me to be good, but they did not know my heart. I had a temper, and a rebellious spirit. A stone on which I stubbed my toe

as a bare-footed boy often got a bang from another stone, and I recall a time when I was bringing a pail of water from the brook and a bar in the gate through which I had to pass fell upon me. Setting down the heavy pail, I gave the bar a beating before lifting it back in place.

I was furious at my two older brothers when they told me that I was too young to go fishing with them. As may be expected, my greatest friction was with my brother Ruel, who was nearly three years older. He was



more robust and stronger, and liked to lord it over me. When I retaliated in any way, I came out less than second best. I admit that my feelings were riled the most when I received a switching which, as I saw it, should have been given to Ruel, who had irritated me to the point of blows.

In spite of my fiery nature, I did not fight with our neighbors' children, except on one occasion. This occurred when I found a clump of large blueberries on a mountain peak where the picking was usually poor. An older boy, seeing my good luck, took his hat and began to beat the

bushes before my face. Being far from perfect, such a spirit of indignation arose in me that I reached for sticks and stones to help me defend my property. The older boy retreated and we soon forgot the incident and remained friends. However, I saw the need for greater self-control.

At the times when I had to be punished, I would go out of the house, put my head against the clapboards, and say all manner of bad words against everybody. Once I was so angry that I took the hatchet and started to chop down the house. My bare legs got another switching for that folly. In school I committed my share of misdemeanors. Instead of studying geography one afternoon, I used a long pliable root to snare the feet of an older boy who sat in front of me, and thus prevented him from going to class. That prank didn't turn out to be as funny as I thought it would be, since we were both brought up before the class and given a good shaking.

In addition, as if the poison of the old Adam within us did not furnish us enough resistance against character formation, there was one boy at school more advanced than the rest of us in knowledge of the facts of life and their fascinating possibilities. Naturally he was eager to impart his information, and eventually the stories passed down the line to the younger boys. While no male in our family was influenced to engage in undue indiscretions, the teachings of Jesus about the wickedness of carnal thoughts convinced us that we needed more than fig leaves to hide our hearts from the eyes of God.

And I shall never forget the time when Father found me back of the hog pen, playing housekeeping with a girl. We had marked off on the ground an imaginary building,

and were just about to retire for the night when Father came upon us with his ox whip in hand. Perhaps fearing that we might be tempted to carry our idea of housekeeping too far, he put an end to it altogether.

So far as my temper was concerned, the Bible reading of Father, with such verses as, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty . . ." and "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," were bound to sink into my mind and heart, and bring forth good fruit in the place of thistles and thorns.

It was undoubtedly this home teaching which later led me to write a verse for two old friends who, while they had long been companions, often argued violently when they played cards or pool or golf. Frequently they would hurl insults at each other until these incidents began to mar their friendship. I wrote:

Tempers and tongues, like prancing steeds,
Were meant to serve your daily needs.
The Golden Rule will help you find
A kindly way to speak your mind.

One of these friends admired the verse so much that he had an enlarged copy hung in his game room. When he met his chum again for a game of cards, he said, "I think we should be a little more courteous to each other than we have been." I trust that I myself have made some progress in practicing what I preach.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN A RUNAWAY CART

DURING my thirteenth year I experienced a shake-up which I must relate. My brother John and I had finished our day's work at a back-lot meadow, had hitched the oxen to the two-wheeled cart, and were headed for home and a warm supper. As John stopped to close a gate behind us, the creaking of rusty hinges must have frightened the team, for suddenly the usually placid animals broke into a wild run. I was sitting on the right, front end of the rickety hay rack, and just behind me on the loose floorboards were our scythes, rakes, and pitchforks. The start was so quick and the speed so rapid that the only thing I could do was hang on for dear life.

The road over which the heavy cart began to bump and bounce had been washed out by rains, until only cobblestones and holes remained. Consequently, the jolting seemed sufficient to shake the rings from Saturn. To make matters worse, the poor apology for a road led

down a steep grade and along the brink of a deep ravine. Realizing the danger of my situation, I did what so many people do under similar circumstances. I turned toward God for help. I knew of no prayer for such a predicament as mine, but I had been taught the two prayers, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and "Our Father which art in heaven." As it was no time to think of sleeping, I began to repeat the prayer which our Lord taught his disciples on the Mount.

While I am not positive of the manner of my praying, I presume that I spoke aloud, as was the custom in our home. In the language of the Psalmist, "I cried unto the Lord in my distress." Regardless of my uncomfortable seat, I said, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

As I think back now, it is clear that the various sections of the petition were much more appropriate than anything that I might have been able to conjure out of my own limited vocabulary. The Divine Kingdom is one of peace and joy, and I was desperately in need of just that. Perhaps, too, it is God's will that we be shaken out of our complacency, and made to realize our need of help from above. "Give us this day our daily bread," was timely, for I was hungry—and growing more so every second; and "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" was appropriate, for it is a law of heaven that to be forgiven, we must forgive. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" was fitting, for though I was not on the verge of breaking any of the Ten Commandments at the time, there was the danger of breaking my neck had I

yielded to the temptation to get off the bounding cart. Certainly I needed to be delivered from the evil of a broken skull.

In fact, as I rode on, I was aware that there were special dangers down the road. Just ahead there was a sharp turn to the right, then another to the left across a rickety log bridge. In a sort of snap-the-whip fashion, I negotiated the first corner without a tip-over, though all the floorboards and haying implements were shaken off, leaving me only a three-inch-in-diameter crosspole of the hayrack to sit on. Although in this position I was decidedly more uncomfortable than when kneeling on our hard floor, I finished the entire prayer: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." Miraculous as it may seem, at the word "Amen" the oxen stopped. Perhaps they had heard Father finish his prayers and knew it was time for a pause, or else they had seen an angel before them. At any rate, I had a chance to dismount from my perilous perch. Then the bovine racers started on again.

Now, I am aware that prayers should not be rattled off in a hurried manner, and probably few prayers have been accompanied with as much rattle as was mine during that wild ride. The result, however, was very satisfactory. The runaway team was presently intercepted by a neighbor who had heard the commotion of iron wheels bumping over stones, and my only misfortune was the need of a cushion for my fundament when I sat down.

BEE LINING

AT TIMES bees, bears, and Bibles all had a place in our activities in a single day. Father had brought honeybees from Vermont, and had kept increasing the number of his hives until he had from fifteen to twenty in our orchard. He was skillful in hiving them when they swarmed, but sometimes a swarm would escape into the woods. Eventually, as new colonies were produced by those which had found homes in hollow trees, there were bee-trees to be found all about us, some near and others very distant.

Father became expert in lining and finding bee-trees. On his trips to inspect his bear traps he carried his bee-box with him, and was on the alert for honeybees gathering their golden store from the wild flowers. After he had captured a bee in one section of his box, Father could draw a slide which would admit the apis to a glass-covered space in which some honey was stored. The bee, entranced by his rich find, would forget his fright and load

up with all he could carry. The little box would be taken to some open space, and the glass cover slowly withdrawn so that the worker could fly home to his queen. To find direction, the bee had to circle around a few times before heading for its secret tree. With keen eyesight, Father would watch the take-off, and then try to follow the general course of the bee.

To judge the distance of a tree, one good way was to put honey where the bees could return for more. If the released bee was prompt in returning for another cargo, it was proof that he did not have to fly very far. Another method was to watch the route the bee took, then capture him again and carry him some distance to the right or to the left of the main line, releasing him from the new position. This procedure often provided a crossline which indicated the general location of the tree. Of course, if the bee-tree happened to be far away, or if bees from other trees were in the vicinity, the bee-hunter sometimes had a difficult task in locating his prize.

There was one swarm of Italian bees which eluded Father and other bee-hunters for several years. The fact that these bees seemed to be very numerous and remarkably industrious indicated that the swarm was a large one, and one with a rich store of honey for the lucky man who could find it. Consequently, there was keen competition in the search. Bees were caught and released from many different angles, and sharp human eyes peered into hundreds of trees, but no one was able to get a crossline on those bees, or to see them going in and out of any hole or crack in a tree. It was evident, moreover, that they had come from a long distance for their free honey.

The bears, however, had better luck. They either smelled honey, or heard the buzzing of bees in a large, dead basswood tree far away from the paths of men. They had found that by standing on their hind legs and reaching a paw through an aperture in the hollow tree they



could claw out bits of the delectable sweets. The stings they received as penalty for the thievery did not deter them from beating a path to that particular tree.

Father was more fortunate than the other bee-hunters for, in his search for ginseng, he came across the bear trail which led to the honey tree. In fact, judging from the fresh large and small tracks around the old tree, it was

apparent that a mother bear had recently been pawing out a tasty treat for her cubs.

After Father had cut down that large shell of a tree, he found so much honey inside that he and my two brothers had to make several trips to bring it all back home. I was old enough to go with them on the last day, and I remember how tired I got, going and coming, and how the angry bees chased and stung me. Yet it was like a holiday to leave the haying and hoeing for the excursion into the forest. And we were well-paid for our efforts, for we got over three hundred pounds of strained honey from that tree. Father spoke of the Land of Canaan which once flowed with milk and honey; and, because of the part that bears had played in making a trail to the tree, he reminded us of Samson's riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

THE MOVE TO CHESTERTOWN

REALIZING that the educational opportunities were very limited in our town, Father frequently spoke of selling our farm and moving to some locality which had better schools. However, habit and the lure of our environment kept us where we were; and the routine of farming, fishing, trapping, and making maple sugar went on year after year. At one time we heard of a man who might pay as much as eight hundred dollars for our property, but this prospect faded away. Instead of seeing gold in our hills, he evidently saw only stones and hard work.

When my older sisters had gone as far as they could in our country school, they secured jobs as waitresses in hotels on Brant Lake and Schroon Lake during the summer months. Later they got more permanent positions as maids and housekeepers. Alice, the oldest girl, taught school for a few years, and then married at the age of

twenty-six. Anna, who was two years younger, married a skillful young tanner. In order to get Father's consent to the marriage, Anna's fiancé, Anthony Schneider, had to promise not to drink intoxicating liquors or use tobacco. Later on this son-in-law and Father became great hunting and fishing pals. As my two brothers grew up, they also became more proficient at fishing and hunting; and I kept at their heels.

Following a natural urge to become a trapper I set a few traps, and succeeded in catching a small number of muskrats, mink, a raccoon, a fox, and a skunk. I did not like the task of killing animals in traps, and felt a special pity for the poor skunk, which I finally had to drown in order to keep myself from being unpleasantly perfumed.

The ability to handle a gun never became a fine art with me. Our old muzzle-loading shotgun kicked so mulishly that it made me somewhat fearful of all guns. Using Father's famous pistol, I once shot at a deer which was standing a short distance from me, but my aim was evidently extremely poor and I missed. The only game that I succeeded in killing with a gun was one muskrat, and a partridge which obligingly refused to fly out of my path. A little later on, when I was firing at a red squirrel, the gun backfired on me, blackening my face with powder and making my ears ring for days. This experience caused me to lose all enthusiasm for wandering through the woods with a gun in my hands.

With the coming of spring, it was always difficult for me to sit studiously and contentedly in a schoolroom. The thought of the sweet maple-sugar season and the winding trout streams pulled me as persistently as the moon

pulls the ocean water. However, as I grew older it was necessary to find employment beyond the pleasures of fishing, and so the summer I was sixteen I took a job as handyman at the Palisade Hotel. Such tasks as filling the woodbox, washing dishes, sweeping floors, and running errands were assigned to me. Not wanting to continue along these lines for the rest of my life, I began to think at this time of what my vocation should be, and decided that if I studied bookkeeping I might be able to get a job in some village store. In the fall I returned to our little district school once more, and began to work out lessons in assets, liabilities, profit and loss. My program of training, however, was destined to come to a sad end.

On a dark day in late October of 1898 someone came to the school to tell my younger sister Eliza and me that our mother had suddenly become critically ill, and that we should come home at once. Since Mother had prepared our breakfast and put up our lunch a few hours before, we were entirely unprepared for the distressing message about her; and to find her helpless and in great pain from a severe stroke was heartrending to us.

Until this time a physician had been called to our house only once, when Antha was so desperately sick. For all of our various illnesses, we had used oils, roots, barks and herbs, but now these were no help. We called a doctor from Chestertown, but in those horse-and-buggy days it took a long time for him to drive the twelve miles to our place. When he finally arrived, we watched silently and hopefully as he stirred his mysterious drops of liquid in a glass of water. A few days later another doctor from

fifty miles away came to make a diagnosis and prescribe treatment. But our beloved mother was seriously stricken, and day after day seemed to lie on the very brink of eternity. In fact, one Sunday morning Father woke us to say that she was dying. This information was so disturbing to me that I rushed out of the house and down the road.

The road past our house was a lonesome one on a Sunday. At the gloomiest place, where a dismal swamp was on one side and a protruding ledge on the other, I paced anxiously back and forth and prayed. I recalled a wonderful moment in my life when I had called Mother the most beautiful woman in the world; and I remembered an occasion when my oldest brother had spoken sharply to Mother, causing her to weep. Her tears had touched his heart more than any form of punishment.

After quite a time my depression was completely removed, as though unseen hands had taken it from me. When I got back to the house, good news awaited me. Mother was very much better.

When she had recovered sufficiently from her stroke to be moved, my three older, unmarried sisters persuaded Father that a house with modern conveniences, and near a doctor, should be found. We decided on Chestertown, which was only twelve miles away, and which had a good school that Eliza and I could attend. Ruel chose to remain at the farm and to trap with Father, at least until the farm might be sold for a fair price.

Mother had a sister living in Chestertown, and since our married sister Alice lived only five miles to the east

and not far from Brant Lake, we would all be quite near to each other. Therefore, a kind of second home was made.

Cordie soon secured a good position as cook at the Chester House, while Antha became housekeeper for a merchant and his invalid wife. Clara became our homemaker. Eliza and I helped about the house as much as we could, and one of my jobs was to milk and care for the cow which Father had given us.

The school at Chestertown was not functioning at that time as a high school, though it did offer some of the more advanced subjects, such as civics, physical geography, and rhetoric. Starting in at the second half of the school year, I began to pursue those subjects. I was a slow student, but had a fairly good memory. I concentrated on the Constitution of the United States until I could recite it word for word.

I remember that there was quite an attractive girl in my classes, and one day I must have been admiring her quite openly as she returned to her seat after a recitation. She saw me and rewarded me with a wink that set my heart fluttering. Later on in the year I invited her to be my partner at a skating party; and I held her hands—through mittens of course—as we circled about on the pond. Though I was then seventeen, I was too bashful and country-green to even think of a goodnight kiss.

qualify as a third-grade district schoolteacher, and a notice was mailed to me during the summer stating that I was "entitled." The next step was to find a school which had not yet hired a teacher for the fall term. I heard of two such schools, one in Grassville, and the other in Hayesburgh. As might be guessed from the names, these towns were in the hayseed belt. I had some misgivings about my acceptability to any trustee who had authority to engage a teacher, for I looked very boyish and would not reach the required age of eighteen until the twenty-fifth of November. I had begun to shave, however, so I neglected my sparse growth of hairs for a number of days, thinking that the slightest sign of a beard might make me look more impressive. Luck was with me, and I was hired for the Hayesburgh district at seven dollars per week, with no board provided.

I was quite elated at the thought of becoming a schoolmaster, although my spirits were somewhat dampened when I heard that the former teacher had found the school so unruly that she had had to resign before finishing her term. It seemed that there were big boys in the district who were hard to handle.

The school was six long miles from the village, so I bought a bicycle for the trips back and forth. This exercise cleared my brain after a day of teaching all of the fundamentals in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Spelling, History, English Grammar, Geography, and Physiology, but the pedaling was not so pleasant on rainy days or when a flat tire made it necessary for me to walk a good part of those six miles. The one reward along the way was

a magnificent view of the higher Adirondack Mountains to the north.

When I had organized my pupils into classes I found them easy to manage, and could not understand why my predecessor had considered the Hayesburgh District difficult. I heard, however, that certain older boys and young men of the neighborhood were apt to visit the school and disrupt all order and discipline. They especially enjoyed teasing the girls and diverting their attention from studies. The ringleader of the gang was a strapping fellow who owned two pairs of boxing gloves and considered himself champion of the community.

Soon after the school term had started the gang put in an appearance, and, as might be expected, I was invited outside by the ringleader. As it was close to the noon hour, we went out into the yard to settle matters. I thought that first I would test his strength, and suggested that we try some athletic stunts which I knew. Standing face to face, we both gripped a broom handle and brought it down between us to see in whose hands it would turn. My hands held. We then sat on the ground with the soles of our shoes together, grasped the broomstick and each endeavored to pull the other up. My opponent had to come up each time. We wrestled Indian fashion, lying on our backs, with our heads in opposite directions and our right arms locked. We raised our right legs, hooked them together and endeavored to flip each other over backwards. I won this bout also.

After the preliminaries, we donned the gloves for the big feature. Although I had never had on a pair of real

boxing gloves, Ruel and I, using the sheepskin mittens Father made us, had frequently fought in the barn for the "championship of the world." My heavier brother was John L. Sullivan, while I was Jim Corbett. I knew nothing of their sparring tactics, but had heard of Corbett's clever footwork; and my own feet, as a result of mountain climbing and crossing streams by jumping from stone to stone, had become quite dependable.

My new challenger, who was heavier than I was and sturdily built, was clearly eager to prove his superiority and to humiliate me before my pupils. Aware that my peace and security as a schoolmaster were at stake, I determined to do my best—and to do it as quickly as possible. Yet apart from a source of strength which I may have inherited from Ethan Allen of the Green Mountain Boys, I can hardly account for what took place. We had been sparring only a short time when a shout rose from the ring of pupils around us: "The teacher has knocked him down!"

To this day I am not sure whether my blow did the trick or whether my opponent merely slipped and fell, since no blood was shed. In any case the fight was ended and the gloves were never brought to the school again. My status as teacher and disciplinarian was established once and for all.

A few weeks later a much more serious situation arose. Some of the children came running to the school to say that an enraged man had chased them and threatened them with a pitchfork. Upon inquiring, I learned

that the man was a hermit named Tom Cardle who lived in a crude shack down in the valley. Ordinarily he was peaceful enough, but recently he had lost some hens, and had surmised that the cattle belonging to the parents of my pupils were responsible. Hence when he saw the children taking a short cut to school along the edge of his swamp, he went after them.

Further inquiry about Tom Cardle revealed a strange story. Earlier in his life Tom had worked at a lumber camp. At that time he was a big, blustery young fellow, fond of teasing and practical jokes. One afternoon, after the day's work had been finished, the men found that they were out of tobacco. It was a long way out to a store. Someone bet a pound of tobacco that no one had the courage to go out of the woods so late in the afternoon and return after dark. Tom Cardle bragged that he was not afraid of any man or of the devil, and he volunteered to go after the tobacco.

On his way back through the lonely woods he heard the howl of a wolf. This was answered by a second howl coming from the opposite side of the trail. Then more howls indicated that a whole pack of wolves was closing in on him. Hard-hearted, courageous Tom began to run for his life. The shanty was only a mile or so ahead, and he hoped that he could make it before the wolves could reach him; but he had already caught a glimpse of a large gray form at his right, and he could hear a chorus of howls just behind. A bad fall on the rough trail brought him to the brink of despair, and he expected at any moment that the hungry beasts would pounce upon him.

However, for some reason the wolves seemed to be playing with him, as a cat plays with a mouse, for no attack came.

The package of tobacco had slipped from Tom's grasp when he stumbled to the earth, but he made no effort to feel around in the darkness for it. Regaining his feet, Cardle raced for the safety of the camp. Now it appeared that he might be saved, for he could see a faint light and the dark shape of a building. In a moment he was at the door. He threw his weight against it so violently that the wooden latch broke in fragments, causing him to crash headlong onto the floor. "Wolves! Wolves!" he cried.

The shanty was empty, but Tom heard voices outside and presently the lumberjacks themselves appeared, laughing hilariously. Gradually it became clear to Tom Cardle that the pursuing wolves were only a hoax. Thinking to give Tom a bit of his own medicine, his friends had enjoyed an evening of fun, but it proved to be costly to their victim. From then on, the wild stare in Tom's eyes indicated that something had gone wrong in his head. Some twist that could not be repaired.

When I heard the story of Tom Cardle, who was now a lonely old man, living in a swamp and harboring a grudge against my pupils, I realized that I should take steps to prevent further incidents. It seemed to me that some animal, such as a skunk or a raccoon, had carried away the man's hens, and I decided to utilize my knowledge of trapping to solve the problem. The next day, having brought from home a steel trap, I ventured down to see the recluse.

When I explained to Tom that I had come to help him, he appeared cooperative and took me to the place where his hens had their roost. He pointed out feathers on the ground and the tracks of cattle. The latter seemed to him to prove that cows had been responsible for the missing members of his flock. I suggested that some predatory animal might have taken his hens, and said that I would look around for proof. A pile of stumps near a little brook held the evidence for which I was looking. There was a hole under the decaying stumps, and in it lay the partly-eaten body of a chicken. Fastening the remaining portion of the chicken into some roots in the upper part of the cavity, I set the trap underneath and scattered dead grass and leaves over the shiny steel jaws and spring. Then I asked Cardle to look at the trap in the morning, and to kill whatever animal might be in it. He replied that he would use his ax to chop in pieces anything that might be caught. I tried to persuade him to be content with merely beating the animal on the head until it became lifeless.

The following day, as I approached the schoolhouse, I saw some boys out in the road holding up a large, dark mink. Early that morning the neighborhood had been awakened by the loud shouts of old Tom Cardle. When the boys went down to his house to learn the cause of the disturbance they had found the animal and the trap in the yard, and the house quiet. Tom, having discovered the animal, must have vented his wrath and gone back to bed to sleep in peace.

Since I had caught the mink on his property, we sold the pelt and bought some supplies for Tom. He seemed

to understand that our intentions were good, for he never chased or threatened any of the pupils after that day.

For the remainder of the school year, things went smoothly and I was known as a schoolmaster who could not only defend himself, but also the pupils under his care.

BELL HOP AT CHESTER HOUSE

AFTER teaching school for a year, I was determined to give myself a better education. Often I had looked off from mountain summits and felt a yearning to visit places which were beyond our narrow valley; and now the way began to open for me. My sister Antha, whose life may have been saved by the dose of iodine given by mistake, had become housekeeper for an invalid lady in Glens Falls. She generously offered to pay the tuition for me at the Glens Falls Academy. Although no one else had ever gone from our community to a higher institution of learning, I was eager to take the bold step, and in order to earn further money took a job as bellboy at the Chester House during the summer months.

My wages at Chester House amounted to only two dollars and fifty cents a week, plus my food and such tips as I might receive. The work afforded an opportunity to meet many different types of people, but some of the

tasks were most monotonous. For instance, when guests were resting in the afternoon, I was sent to a tiny room behind the kitchen where I peeled potatoes. Such employment tends to make a person more stupid than our Maker intended anyone to be, but—if we will find and use them—there are always ways to counteract the monotony of a dull job. While peeling potatoes I studied the catechism of the Presbyterian Church, and won a Bible for correctly answering all the questions at one sitting.

Another of my tasks at the Chester House was to fill bottles from barrels of whiskey stored in the basement. The process was simple. One end of a long rubber tube was inserted into the bung hole of the barrel, and I held the other end between my teeth. By sucking on the tube, the liquor soon came to my lips. Then, holding the tube with thumb and fingers, I inserted the end into one of the glass containers and let the liquor flow into the bottle. By pinching the tube and again releasing the flow into other bottles, I soon had as many quarts or pints as were ordered.

As for myself, I did not care for the taste of beer and stronger drinks, so stuck to grape juice, sometimes concocting my own highballs by mixing grape juice with gingerale, lemon and honey. We had been taught at home not to drink intoxicating liquors, and I also remembered the words of Abraham Lincoln when a friend advised him to take whiskey to prevent seasickness on a voyage which he anticipated. "No," said Lincoln, "I have seen too many people seasick on land from taking that remedy."

On occasion I would accompany one of the hotel guests on a day's fishing trip. Once a gentleman named

Mueller asked the proprietor of the hotel where he could go to catch trout, and was told that if anyone could find trout that late in the season, I was the person. It was no hardship for me to be given the day off to go fishing. With a horse and buggy we drove twelve miles to the head of Brant Lake, then two miles more up the rutty, stony road toward Pharaoh Lake. Hitching the mare to a tree, we walked a half-mile through a jungle of alders to a large, deep pool where, from boyhood experience, I knew that the trout lived when the brook got warm and shallow in August.

It was easy to stand in one spot on the bank and catch those hungry fish, enough of them so that when we put them in a dishpan back at the hotel everyone was astonished at our catch. Ordinarily, for my duties of brushing off dust, carrying bags, and taking drinks to rooms, I would receive ten or twenty-five cents as a tip—and perhaps fifty cents when a guest checked out of his room. In appreciation of my guidance in fishing matters, however, this Mr. Mueller gave me five dollars when he left Chester House, a tidy sum for a bellhop who was saving for a higher education.

While working at this summer resort, I also had the opportunity to learn something about the teachings of Christian Science. The proprietor's wife at Chester House was the Reader for a group of people in Chestertown, and chose me to pass the plate for the offering. Thus I heard of a new way to solve the problem of evil, which had always baffled me. In brief the theory is that God is good, and that out of His infinite wisdom and goodness He has created all things perfect, and therefore the idea

of evil cannot have a place in the world. Sin, evil, and the devil are nothing but illusions, or Adam-dreams of mortal mind.

Having acquired some interest in logic, I wanted to know how these illusions and Adam-dreams had ever found a place in the perfect world. I had had some bad dreams and nightmares in my boyhood days, which had seemed very real to me and were most distressing. Why did these happen to me, if there was no evil spirit causing them? If illusions cause all the disagreeable events which we know as wars, murders and other cruelties, we have the same problem in eradicating illusions that we do in fighting these things under the name of realities. No one could tell me how these illusions can exist in a creation in which the All-good and the infinite and perfect mind is everything.

Although the problem of evil was not solved for me by the logic of Christian Science, I could see the great value of trying to fill our minds and hearts so full of God's love that we can "overcome evil with good," as St. Paul taught. And it is good to know that there are people who have achieved so much happiness and health by thinking and speaking only kind thoughts.

A less sublime incident occurred one day when I was sweeping the hotel veranda. Suddenly I heard excited voices, and as I paused in my sweeping I saw a crowd of children following a strange-looking man. Long, dark whiskers sloped forward from his chin, and a worn fireman's hat was pulled low on his forehead. His coat was a potato sack, with slits for his head and arms. His trousers

had been patched with so many dirty, frayed rags that they looked like a badly worn carpet. In place of shoes, the hermit had tied various colored pieces of cloth around his feet to form huge, unshapely moccasins. Over his shoulder he carried a parcel, tied to a stick. As we learned later, this was old Holden Brace, coming to the store to buy supplies.

Such an unusual sight naturally was the cause of much curiosity. A group of guests from the hotel gathered by the side of the road, and some of the more forward men engaged the strangely attired man in conversation. They asked permission to take his picture, and clicked their cameras while old Mr. Brace explained that he happened to be wearing his old clothes. One man offered him a drink from the bar, but this the hermit refused as dangerous and sinful. And at this point he proceeded to exhort us on how to live in peace and happiness. He said that the devil is constantly trying to get the best of people, and that the majority of folks become careless and let the arch enemy get them down. He asserted that if he were to put on boots, devils and witches would torment him. His main point was that if we want to keep out of Satan's power, we must be honest—honest with God, and honest with one another.

When one of the listeners ventured to say, "You seem to know a lot about the devil, Mr. Brace. You must meet him often," he replied, "Yes, I met the devil once when I lived on Hague Mountain. It was just at the close of day, when I was crossing a narrow bridge, and the devil was attempting to cross from the opposite direction at the same time."

"How did you know it was the devil?"

"Because," answered the ragged preacher, "one of his feet was twice as big as the other, and he hissed like a cat. When I stepped to one side to let the fellow pass, he jumped on my back. I pulled him off but he sprang at me again. Then I became impatient and threw him onto the bridge so hard that he bounced right up into the air and disappeared. Yes," he concluded, "we must get the best of the devil, or he will get the best of us."

It may have been that Holden Brace's appearance alone was enough to scare the devil, but in any event he had found his own way of illustrating the words of the apostle James: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

OLD MUTTON GLUTTON

DURING this same summer we made the acquaintance of Mr. Mutton Glutton, a large bear who was attempting to add to his enormous weight by feasting on sheep. Father had been aware of the presence of this veteran marauder among the mountains, and had carefully set his traps, but seldom in his experience had he known of a bear who was so trap-shy. All through the spring and early summer, as long as bear pelts remained prime and shiny, strong traps had been set in vain in various locations just over the Essex County line, where a bounty was paid on every dead bear. It was Father's practice, in order to receive the fullest remuneration for his efforts, to set his traps at a time when skins were at their best, and also in a county that paid a bounty. Dur-

ing the early days of July he would take up his traps and wait for the next trapping season. So generally the bears had a summer holiday.

The particular bear whom I have called Mutton Glutton was quick to make the most of his holiday. He waxed very bold, and made increasingly frequent visits to pastures near our Brant Lake farm until it became clear that, unless he was apprehended, he would completely



destroy at least two flocks of sheep. At first he had been content to select tender lamb for his supper once or twice a month and then go back to his Indian turnips, ants, grubs, and wild berries, but he gradually developed a ravenous appetite for mutton. Aware that men were watching for him, he outwitted them by alternating between two pastures, and by making occasional raids on more remote flocks of sheep.

Albert Griffin and Arthur Smith were the men whose

flocks suffered the greatest depletion. Their combined losses totalled eighteen sheep. Arthur carried on a good business in the summer peddling veal, lamb, and blueberries, and because of Mutton Glutton he decided to add bear meat to his list. Seeking both revenge and remuneration, he began to do some trapping on his own account. However, he was not a skillful trapper, and it was a very wise old bear he was trying to capture, so his chances were slim. When Smith inspected his trap, he would find it sprung and thrown into a brush pile; and when, with rifle in hand, he waited at night for the thief to show up, the darkness always prevented accurate shooting. Finally, in desperation, he came to my father and Ruel for help, and offered them permission to trap on his land.

Since it was now early August, Father felt he could not be interested in the pursuit of elusive Mr. Mutton Glutton. Not only would it be a waste of time, he thought, to try to trick the bear into a trap, but it would also spoil his chances of catching Mutton Glutton the next spring over the line in Essex County. Furthermore, Father never put out bear traps near pastures and houses where cattle, dogs, or people might be caught. In fact, it used to be said jokingly that, before catching bears, Ed Roberts drove them from Warren County over into Essex where a bounty was offered. In any case, Father refused Arthur Smith's offer.

However, brother Ruel, who had attended many bear traps with Father and who was becoming quite a successful trapper himself, decided that he should respond to the farmer's appeal for help. He conceived a

plan by which he believed that he could outwit the wily bear. Taking the remains of the last sheep which had been killed, he fastened them among the lower limbs of a yellow birch tree, and set his trap directly beneath. Imitating Father's methods, he had first carefully removed enough sod and earth to let the trap set level. Some wisps of swamp hay were lying on the ground and he carefully lifted one of them with a pitchfork and put it down over the trap and coiled log-chain which was fastened to the tree. It seemed to him that the odor of musty hay might prevent the bear from smelling the trap. Then, too, he hoped that the bear's interest in the uneaten portion of the sheep would persuade him to take the last few steps on his hind legs, and so divert his keen nose from the trap. A half-grown lamb was also tied to a stake nearby, so that the bleating would throw the thief off guard. Soon after sundown, six men with loaded rifles hid in Arthur Smith's barn and waited for the approach of their hoped-for culprit.

Mutton Glutton always seemed to plan his visits at a time of night when men could not easily see the sights on their guns, and his behavior on that night was no exception. Dusk deepened into darkness, and the watchers began to fear that there would be no entertainment for their party. Suddenly one of the men moved and pointed toward a deeper blotch of darkness which was slowly moving toward the trap. By this time the frightened lamb was pulling at its rope and bleating. The black form paused for a moment, then stood up like a man and headed for the birch tree. There was a thud as the jaws

of the trap closed together, and then the night air was filled with frightful howls.

Even in the daytime, a trapper runs the risk of being mauled when he comes upon a bear that has just been caught in a trap, but it is even more dangerous to approach such an animal after dark. Realizing that the bear might make a rush at them, the men emerged cautiously from the barn. However, as they neared the birch tree, they saw no sign of the bear. The thirty-foot chain had made it possible for him to plunge into the thick foliage of the swamp. Approaching the dense bushes, some of the men began to fire their guns at random, hoping that a few of their bullets might hit their mark. In their approach, they had forgotten that the great length of the chain would give the bear enough freedom to make a long charge. Suddenly he did this very thing, causing the men to bump against each other in the darkness as they hastily retreated. One man jumped into a watering trough; and another, younger man, unnerved by the bear's fearful snort, ran into the barn and climbed up into the haymow. Meantime, my brother turned at just the right moment, placed the muzzle of his rifle on the big dark head, and fired.

Because of all the sheep on which Mr. Mutton Glutton had feasted, he weighed nearly five hundred pounds. His pelt was shiny, but so far from prime that it sold for only five dollars. An inspection of his feet revealed the reason for his hatred of traps, for three toes were missing from a front paw. Perhaps it was the maimed paw which had led the greedy eater to turn to the farmers for re-

venge and an easy living. Anyway, there is much retaliation in the world, and Arthur Smith realized a considerable amount of money by selling bear meat to his customers. Most important of all, the remaining sheep could graze in safety on their mountain pastures.

GLENS FALLS ACADEMY

*I*N SEPTEMBER of 1900 I tied my few belongings to my bicycle and headed for Glens Falls Academy, some twenty-seven miles away. Aware that the small amount of money that I had been able to save would not last for many weeks, I was determined to finance my education by finding odd jobs after school. For one who had never been more than twelve miles from home, the arrival at Glens Falls seemed to leave the old farm a long way behind.

Nevertheless a kind Providence was with me, and I was fortunate in still having members of my family around me. There was Antha, and presently Cordie came to join us. She had gained valuable experience as a cook in Chestertown, and now started a home bakery in Glens Falls. Then, unexpectedly, a few weeks after school had started, my other sisters and brothers moved with Mother

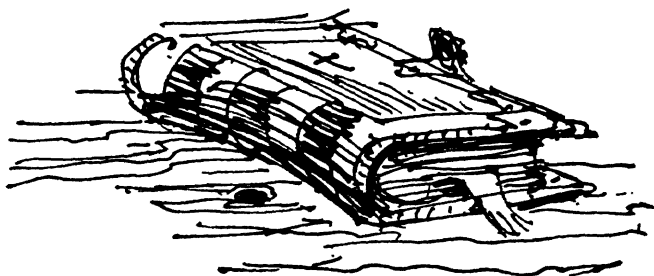
from Chestertown to Glens Falls, and again we could make a home together.

There is not much to report about that first year at the Academy, though I must have absorbed some of the knowledge to which I was exposed. I do recall that in the study of physiology I learned that "sneezing" is the spasmodic contraction of the diaphragm caused by the irritation of the olfactory nerve. Until that time I had been able to do the trick as well as anybody, but it was enlightening to know the why and how of it. One other fragment of information which remains with me is that the average person needs from seven to seven and one-half hours of sleep at night; some require eight hours, children ought to have nine, and fools ten. So, except for rare occasions, I have aimed to limit the length of my slumber.

Education did not come easily to me. I found Latin and Algebra quite difficult, although I learned to tackle the more difficult mathematical problems by myself and eventually became a star pupil in the latter branch of learning. Greek, which I studied during my second year, helped to round out a heavy schedule. When our class came to the period of Ancient History which dealt with the Hebrews, the teacher was quite amazed at my ready and accurate information. Other students who had had the advantage of Sunday School and regular church attendance did not begin to have the knowledge of the Bible that I had gained from our home reading. I certainly never made the mistake of the youth who, on returning home from church, informed his parents that the minister's text was "Hold a grater to Solomon's ear," a

very mutilated form of "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here," or of the student who defined "Republican" as a "notorious sinner mentioned in the New Testament."

My knowledge of the Bible also stood me in good stead during my sophomore year, when I participated in a school debate. The question for debate was: "Resolved, that the blessings of peace are greater than the blessings of war." The Master of the Academy, who was debating on the affirmative side, maintained that heaven is the place of perfect peace. In rebuttal I picked up the school Bible, turned to the Book of Revelation, and read the



passage: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." I made the point that, according to the Bible, war was necessary to establish the heavenly peace. Later at a banquet at which I was asked to speak, the master of the school mentioned the debate and the way in which he had gone into heaven itself to fortify his arguments, and how I had followed him into the sacred stronghold and had thrown him out.

In addition to the opportunity for getting a better education at the Academy, there were other advantages which had not been available to me up among the mountains. I joined a company of boys who were taught military drills, became a member of the local Y.M.C.A., and played right guard on the school football team. As for my social life, some of the girls looked amazingly alluring, but my bashfulness kept me from mingling with them. I did get up courage to walk home with one charming blonde just once in four years.

FIRST STEPS TOWARD THE MINISTRY

IT WAS toward the end of my sophomore year at the Glens Falls Academy that I took my first long step toward the ministry. Also at this time the idea of going to college began to stir in my mind. Over the years I had read the *Christian Herald* sermons to Mother, and I had frequently felt the urge to become a preacher. So I bought a few books on theology, and after studying them passed an examination which entitled me to serve as an "exhorter." One of the questions that I had to answer was, "How do you account for the good people who do not happen to be church members?" I remembered reading the words of Henry Ward Beecher and replied that some of the gospel seed has got out of the church windows and brought forth splendid fruit. The broad-minded, scholarly clergyman before whom I appeared was so pleased with this answer that he gave me a high mark.

I gave a talk at a small church at Sanford Ridge in

Glens Falls, and by passing another examination advanced to the status of a Local Preacher. This qualified me to be appointed as pastor of some church which did not have the services of a fully ordained Methodist minister. Such an opening became available at Bolton Landing, a village of a few hundred inhabitants on beautiful Lake George. The church at Bolton Landing was in its infancy, the edifice itself being incomplete and the work at a standstill. The few members were discouraged, and the elderly clergyman who had been preaching to them had given up in despair. There was no parsonage, and no regular salary. Moreover, the church was part of a circuit, there being two other church buildings several miles apart. In addition to the two services—morning and evening—at the central building in Bolton Landing, the pastor was expected to preach on alternate Sunday afternoons at one of the other churches. Of course, calling on the sick, and visiting among the parishioners was standard practice for any minister. And since there was no janitor, I was to perform the chores of sweeping and dusting the building, kindling the fire in cold weather, and cleaning and lighting the kerosene lamps.

During the week I attended the Academy, with a full schedule of subjects in the College Preparatory course—English, history, third-year Latin, and second-year Greek. On weekends the trip from Glens Falls to Bolton Landing took at least an hour and a half each way, depending upon the weather. Traveling first by trolley, the nine-mile trip to Lake George Village—a town formerly called Caldwell—was only about thirty minutes. As I passed Bloody Pond, so named because of the dead and wounded who

fell there during the French and Indian War, and continued past Fort William Henry, I could imagine the bitter historical events which had occurred there little more than a century before.

From Lake George Village to Bolton Landing there was no fine, paved road as there is today, but the trip along one of America's most beautiful lakes never became monotonous. Whether in the heat of summer, or when the thermometer registered thirty below zero early Monday mornings, nature's unfolding combination of islands, mountains, and trees moved me to praise and adoration.

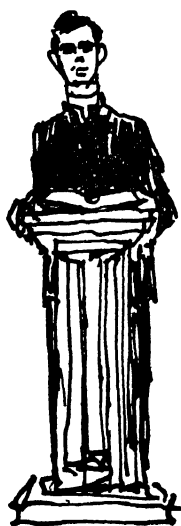
This part of the trip wound back and forth along an old dirt road, and was made by stage. The stage driver, James L. Maranville of Bolton, who carried mail and passengers back and forth, matched the scenery in interest and entertainment. Always cheerful, with ruddy face and such robust stamina that he did not need to wear gloves even on the coldest days, he seemed born for his work.

Often I would be the only passenger, coming in on Friday evening and returning to school early Monday morning, and I would ride beside Mr. Maranville bundled up in warm robes. On one such day, he asked for my opinion on the Bible passage: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." After some brief general comments, I turned the text back to him, asking for his own point of view.

He replied: "Well, I believe it means that when a man thinks wrong, he is wrong: and when he thinks right, he is right. This is something a person can feel in his own heart."

It seemed to me that this small-town philosopher had gone to the heart of the matter.

From the very beginning, the friendly observations and companionship of this good man helped to steady me, for I approached my first ministerial post with fear and trembling, and with mixed thoughts at the prospect of facing an unknown group. While it was with great joy that my parents learned of my becoming a preacher, my own misgivings must have been apparent when I stood



in the pulpit at the age of eighteen to expound the scriptures to my first congregation of three people.

I was encouraged, however, as gradually more and more came to hear the "boy preacher" until there was a time when latecomers had to stand. Since I was not taking any theological courses at the Academy to aid me in the preparation of sermons, I used the Bible stories for my themes. Illustrations from great books such as *Ivan-*

hoe, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Silas Marner* were used to strengthen my messages, which were always delivered without notes.

On Friday evenings I opened the church, did the sweeping and dusting, started the furnace if the weather was cold, saw that the hymn books were in each pew, and lighted the lamps for choir practice. When rehearsal was over, I put out the lights and locked the door.

For these various services I received no fixed salary, but all the plate offerings came to me, and they were almost entirely in small coins. I was able to appreciate the story about the Quarter which refused to speak to the Penny. The humble Penny rebuked the shiny snob, saying: "So you think you are quite important—well, *I* am found at church much more often than you!"

Nevertheless, I was grateful for all the pennies, nickels, and dimes which came to me to help pay for my clothes and books. The pennies gave me a special purpose, for Mother had a large piggy-bank which I kept well supplied.

As good as it is to have plenty of money for the necessities and luxuries of life, it is better to have friends. A small village is an excellent place for forming such relationships. Some of the good friends made at Bolton Landing are still friends today. Among them is the family of Bert Lamb, whose children also became members of my church. These people were not summer visitors, who opened their cottages only for the vacation months, but were of the hardy group of natives who lived at Bolton Landing all year round. Through a home-study course,

Bert bettered his position until he eventually owned a store of his own, became supervisor of his town and sheriff of the county.

As he prospered, Bert Lamb bought a big sawmill on the bay behind Green Island where he and his sons and helpers floated the big logs down from Tongue Mountain and various places around the lake to be cut up into rough lumber for summer camps. Since the Lambs owned quite a bit of property, they built cottages along the shore which rented to the summer people, but during the long winters when the lake sometimes froze solid to a thickness of two feet, they sawed the ice and stored it in a big barn for sale during the summer months.

From the tiny settlement of Bolton Landing, Bert Lamb sent his three children to college. His older son, Wallace, now Superintendent of Schools at Hicksville, Long Island, has written an interesting history of Lake George, and another of New York State.

Success frequently creates difficulties, and I began to encounter them. For one thing, there was trouble about the choir. All seemed to be going well until one of the women prominent in the church confided to me that a woman who operated a saloon in the village was one of our volunteer singers. I was advised to let the offending person know that her services were no longer desired. When I appeared reluctant to do such a discourteous thing, it was further suggested that I should refuse to shake hands with the obnoxious party.

Recalling the passage in the New Testament in which Jesus replies to the self-righteous Pharisees by saying,

"They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," it was clear to me that I should welcome all who came to church—and invite them to come often. As questionable as it might look to have a saloon keeper singing in the choir, I did not think it wise to attempt a separation of the sheep from the goats, not, at least, until all had had a chance to hear the gospel.

My unwillingness to follow the equivalent of official orders placed me in a particularly difficult situation, for the offended church leader had been providing me with free room and board on the weekends. Moreover, there was the possibility that she would report my conduct to the higher church officials of the district, have me removed from my appointment, and thus give me a bad name at the very outset of my career.

As was my habit, I prayed for guidance in this matter, and on my return to Glens Falls on Monday morning, I talked the problem over with Mother. She advised me to be kind and patient with both the sinners and the saints, explaining that some well-meaning people are handicapped with mental and moral twists about which we know so little that we should be slow to judge them. It would be better, she said, to combine firmness with gentleness, and to trust the Lord. Her advice proved to be absolutely right, for when I went back to my pastorate at the end of the academy week, I heard some splendid news.

Of her own accord, the lady saloon keeper had given up her business and established a meat market instead. As

time went on, I am happy to say that the erstwhile objectionable person became the choir leader, President of the Ladies' Aid, and a pillar of the church.

I continued supplying the little church at Bolton Landing during my junior and senior years at the Academy, and the offerings enabled me to keep going financially. While church affairs were now progressing well, I was headed for more trouble. It came about in this way.

As has been mentioned, on Friday nights I began my chores of readying the church for Sunday service. On the night that my new problem arose, I had turned out the lights after choir rehearsal, checked the windows and doors, and was walking away from the building when I saw the young lady organist standing alone by the side of the street.

Though shy and inexperienced, there was sufficient chivalry in me so that I asked her if I could accompany her up the long, lonesome, unlighted road to her home. The offer was accepted and this small incident afforded me the satisfaction which is always one's own reward for a courteous act.

However, as soon as I returned to my room, the woman with whom I was boarding at the time came to tell me that she knew exactly where I had been, and that if I ever repeated such an incident I would not be welcome at her house. What a rebuff to a bashful young man who had, for the second time in his life, mustered sufficient courage to walk home with a charming girl.

After some deliberation, I sought and found a new place to stay during the weekends. The change proved to be a good one, for congregations increased. People who

had never been known to go to church came out to hear the way I preached, to join in our gospel singing, and to cooperate for the growth of the church. There were even some remarkable changes in the lives of some people whom I endeavored to help.

An old fisherman who was noted for being a hard-hearted infidel used to talk with me about fishing. Later on when he became ill I called at his home to inquire about his health and to ask if I could do anything for him. When I suggested that we read a passage from the Bible, he became very bitter in his denunciation of the scriptures and of the church. While this visit was not particularly successful, on my next call I began to read to him from *Pilgrim's Progress*. We proceeded from the flight from the City of Destruction, through the Slough of Despond, and had come to the miracle of the cross, at the sight of which the heavy burden fell from Christian's back. Unexpectedly I was interrupted by an exclamation from my listener. "By jolly," he said, "that's good!" The next day, my fisherman-friend was eager to kneel in prayer with me, and I saw tears on his coarse, weather-beaten face. A few days later he told me that he had seen the Lord Jesus enter his room and sit on the edge of the bed.

Another elderly man, known for his atheism, gambling, and drunkenness, openly rebuffed me when I first met him. I had prayed for the power to help such men, and was disappointed because I had not felt divine energy guiding me. However, I found that simple acts of friendliness and kindness seemed to be charged with dynamic influence. I recalled the way in which Jesus asked the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well for a drink of water,

and, overcoming all prejudice, custom, and social barriers, had made her his messenger to her people. I tried a similar approach on the old gambler, who had never been seen in church. One day when I was to be late in returning to Bolton Landing, I asked him to look after the fire so that the church would be warm. This simple request took hold of his heart, and soon there was a new worshipper in one of our pews.

As if attending the Academy during the week, preparing my sermons, doing the janitor work and calling on the sick were not enough to keep me occupied, I established a preaching appointment in a farm house, far back from the village. On Friday evenings people would come from all directions to fill the house and to listen to the messages that I brought them. They even put on an old-fashioned donation supper to show their appreciation of my efforts and to fill my pockets with bills and change.

In addition to preaching and the other pastoral duties, it fell to me to raise money to complete the church edifice. The building needed lath and plaster, new pews and altar rail, the completion of the belfry, and various other improvements. During the summer vacations, therefore, I called on the prosperous summer visitors in the vicinity and solicited donations. Of course, I found some people who gave quite generously, while others, reputed to be worth millions, explained that they were barely surviving. All this was good experience for me, and prepared me for three larger building projects later on in my ministry. I can vividly recall going to see one wealthy man for a donation to our building fund, and finding him quite under the influence of liquor. He dismissed me abruptly

but, for some reason that I cannot explain, I returned to see him the next morning. As he saw me at the end of his large veranda, he began to apologize and invited me to sit down. He then proceeded to give me a lecture on the various creeds. As he saw it, the main point of difference between some denominations concerned the horns of the devil. Many people were sure that the devil had horns, while others held that he was a mulley. The man did not give me a chance to talk, but when he had finished his speech, he asked, "How much do you want?" When he had written out his check, he told me of a friend who "has lots more money than me," and suggested that I call on him.

Of course, I went to see the friend. This man listened to my appeal, and then said, "It's the same old story, isn't it?" Perhaps he had been warned about my persistence, and wanted to test me; in any case he said nothing further, but began to read his mail. I sat down near him, and began making some notes for my next sermon. Even after the man had gone into another room, I kept at my notes. Finally he returned and placed a fifty-dollar bill in my hand. Thus I found that it paid to wait expectantly.

Another of my activities involved the closing of saloons in our village. I had noticed the frequency of drunkenness, especially among the older men, and I discovered that there was such a thing as local-option, which provided that the people could vote on the question of licensing saloons. I drew up a petition for such a vote, but was told that it would be hopeless. And hopeless it seemed, since I was in school when the ballots were cast, and could not help influence voters. However, the vote

was against the saloons by a large majority. I learned that certain men who were supposed to be on the wet side had worked hard among their friends to clean up the town. The enemy was divided, and defeated. An influential man who was rather intemperate himself declared that he was with me because, as he put it, "The stuff they sell in the saloons kills at ten rods."

SUMMER AND FALL, 1905

AFTER graduating from the Academy in 1905, I decided to remain at Bolton Landing for another year, so that I could try to complete the church building. Pews were installed, a new furnace and windows bought, and the walls finished.

During the summer of that year, I enjoyed the fellowship of a theological student who was caring for the local Baptist church. While he was an ardent advocate of baptism by immersion, and I was serving a church in which sprinkling prevailed, we got along perfectly on both land and sea. In fact, one evening when the boat that we were rowing sprang a leak and began to fill with water, my friend readily admitted that too much liquid slowed up transportation. Strangely enough, one elderly member of his church and one of mine resented our friendliness. They thought that we should be fighting over our credal differences. To add emphasis to their convictions, my friend's disgruntled church member began to attend my

church, while my sour saint went to his services. Accepting the exchange agreeably, my Baptist companion remarked hopefully, "It usually does cabbage heads good to transplant them."

For recreation, I frequently took an hour or so off to go fishing. Since I was usually rewarded with brook trout, or pickerel from Lake George, I soon established a reputation as a fisherman. Some people who did not know the art of fishing even suggested that the minister probably prayed for the fish to bite.

Such an explanation seemed more plausible than ever when I announced that I planned to go out into the deeper water for the coveted and more elusive lake trout. I had bought a long and strong linen line and gang of hooks, but had little knowledge of the lake, and no whitefish, which are the natural food for this particular trout. The only lure that I had been able to get was artificial. Realizing, however, that luck seldom comes to people who don't try, I selected a mild morning and ventured forth.

A skilled fisherman, who had been out since day-break reported that the fish were not striking and he was giving up. He had one badly mangled whitefish, which he gave to me. So, in spite of the fact that the other fishermen were having no luck and condemned the water as being too calm, I decided to make the best of that warm, sunny day.

Even if the fish are not cooperative, a beautiful lake affords other rewards to those who look for them. I rowed in wide circles, just off the point of Tongue Mountain, and pleasing scenes of quietness and strength met my eyes in every direction. There were the Narrows, leading

up through numerous little islands toward Paradise Bay and Black Mountain; there was spacious Northwest Bay, bordered with wooded hills and rounded mountains; to the west were Crown and Green and Dome Islands; and, toward the south, pointing to historic Fort William Henry, ten miles of silvery water, with more islands, hills, and protecting mountains. The tender green of the trees gave a fitting touch of life and beauty, as if all was united in silent praise of the Creator.

I was drinking my fill of this panorama when my bamboo pole began to bend as though I had hooked a submerged snag. Then, just as I was checking my speed to avoid breaking the line, several rapid, violent tugs caused the rod to thrash the water.

Aware that I had hooked a big one, I endeavored to play him carefully. In spite of all I could do, the tip of my pole kept churning the surface of the lake. My heart was beating rapidly. I knew that this was the largest and most stubborn fish that had ever honored me with a nod, and I was afraid that he might get away. Every time that I attempted to reel in a bit of line, counter-pulls thwarted my efforts. Eventually, of course, the fish tired and consented to be brought near the surface, but he did not give up easily. Several times when it seemed that he was coming into view, he turned and fought his way back to the bottom, more than one hundred feet down. Fortunately, my hooks were so firmly imbedded in the mouth of my fish that he could not break away. I must have had "beginner's luck," for I landed the prize trout of the day, a specimen weighing nearly ten pounds.

As proof that good fortune can happen more than

once, I was favored again a few days later. At my request two ladies, one an adjutant and the other a lieutenant from the Salvation Army in Glens Falls, came to speak and sing in my church. An offering was taken for the Army; and, to show further appreciation for their services, I invited the two ladies to go for a ride on the lake. I suggested that we take fishlines with us, but the lieutenant was not enthusiastic, explaining, "I'm a Jonah to any fishing party. I never catch anything except weeds and rocks." Nevertheless, the lines and some borrowed bait were put in the boat.

We set out on a placid morning, another of those days when the old fishermen considered the water too calm for strikes. However, recalling my former experience, I headed for the place where I had found my hungry fish. Soon, in a voice that matched the tranquil water, the lieutenant said, "I think I had a bite."

I glanced at her slender rod and saw that the line had become detached from the reel and was in danger of being lost. Backing quickly with one oar, I grasped the line, handed it to the lady, and remarked that since the tackle had been borrowed, we were lucky in saving it. She replied, "I don't feel anything on it now. Perhaps it was one of my usual weeds." However, the line appeared to me to be drawing a bit heavily. I thought that she might possibly have a small fish, and instructed her to pull in carefully, and to let the line back through her fingers in a taut manner if she felt any hard pull.

Holding the gaff-hook in readiness, I looked down into the transparent water and saw a large trout swimming along as if he were following the bait. Indeed, as we dis-

covered a few seconds later, he was hooked only by the skin of his teeth. Possibly, in an effort to accommodate the charming lady, he was graciously consenting to be led like a lamb to the slaughter. I was not an expert with the big hook, and merely frightened the fish on my first attempt to take him into the boat. Fortunately the lieutenant proved to be adept in following orders. Standing up in the boat, she let out line and pulled it back again until I was able to make effective use of the gaff.

When we had our beautiful seven-and-one-half pound trout safely in the boat, the serene lieutenant, instead of boasting of her catch, voiced her gratitude by saying, "The Lord has sent us a fish." Aware that the weather was supposed to be unfavorable, and that other fishermen were not doing very well on that day, I fully agreed with her sentiment.

In the fall of that same year, 1905, I went back to my home community to conduct a preaching mission for a week in the weathered schoolhouse at Brant Lake. As assistant I took with me the noted cowboy Broncho Charlie Miller, who had recently been converted by the Salvation Army in Glens Falls. Broncho Charlie, champion broncho buster of the West, had been one of the celebrities in Buffalo Bill's famous circus, traveling to Europe and performing before royalty. He once showed me a picture of Queen Victoria which she had autographed for him.

After the Wild West show was no more, Broncho Charlie had operated a riding stable in Glens Falls. At a Salvation Army street meeting he heard the young officers singing and preaching, and followed them to their hall,

where he accepted their invitation to become a Christian. As further proof of his conversion, he often joined the Army circle on the streets and gave his testimony.

Having heard of the conversion, and knowing that Broncho Charlie might need encouragement in his new life, I had made it a point to visit him from time to time. It was in this endeavor that I got him first to come up to Bolton Landing—where he did some skillful riding and roping tricks in the street in front of the church—and



later to accompany me to Brant Lake. At Brant Lake Broncho Charlie's role was to tell of his life in the West, and of his experiences in Buffalo Bill's circus, while I was to do the preaching. From the start, our evangelistic team, which also included Father, awakened the people of the neighborhood, drew them to our meetings, and moved many of them to take a more positive stand for Christianity.

There was one man, however, who held back. His name was Bill Bentley, and with a voice which rever-

berated from one side of the valley to the other, he was forever invoking the damnation of heaven on his poky old oxen and on every stone that stopped his plow or dulled his scythe. On one occasion, as he was emitting an irreverent torrent of words at his oxen, the curse had back-fired on him. A piece of the whip with which he was emphasizing his maledictions broke off, flew back, and blinded one of his eyes for life. An atheist who lived at the lake during the summers took great delight in getting Bill Bentley to work for him, so that he could hear Bill swear. The violent oaths seemed to afford this man sardonic pleasure, and to confirm his lack of faith. During the plowing, hoeing and haying seasons, therefore, our valley was filled with Bill's rasping, echoing curses. It was as if Satan, in a great rage against the piety of my parents, had gone into open competition with them.

And yet this farmer with the unruly tongue was good to his family and kind to his neighbors. He let us borrow his boat whenever we wanted to fish on the lake, and he allowed us to change our clothes in his wagon house when we went swimming from his sandy beach. Possibly his profanity was only a bad habit, and Bill may have been like the man who once said to his minister, "Dominie, I am not so wicked after all. I swear and you pray, but neither of us mean anything by it."

Well, on the last evening of our meetings in the tiny schoolhouse the man who was so loud and so fluent in his use of sacrilegious words stood up and declared that he wished to be counted on the Lord's side. Since I had to leave the community the next day and go back to my church at Bolton Landing, I had no immediate op-

portunity to check on the lasting quality of this evangelistic mission in the land of my boyhood, but I got a report during the following summer. The spirit of blasphemy had been decisively cast out. No one had heard a single oath proceed from the mouth of our last convert. Bill himself told me why he had been so reluctant to yield to the Christian invitation. He explained, "I had a rocky plot of ground to plow, and expected that I would swear a thousand times while doing it. But, strange as it may seem, I plowed that rough area without having the least inclination to curse a single stone."

MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE

AT THIS time I became more and more convinced that I should continue my education toward the ministry. I considered various schools and colleges, but it did not seem possible that I could assume the financial burden of a regular four-year college course. I had heard of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago which appealed to me because I understood that it was denominational and offered courses that within two years might enable a student to become a Bible teacher, minister, song leader or missionary. Stories I had heard of the sincerity and magnetism of D. L. Moody, who had left his career as a shoe salesman to become one of the foremost evangelists of his time, also led me to think that the institution named for him might be just what I needed.

Moody's example appealed to me particularly, for while he did not have a formal, theological training, he devoted himself to reading the Bible and had known re-

markable success in his Sunday School classes. When a critic once called attention to his mistakes in English, Moody frankly admitted his lack of education, but said: "With such English as I can use, I am trying to do my best to serve God." He then asked, "What are you doing with your English?"

My train trip to Chicago to attend the Institute for the spring term of 1906 was quite uneventful. It was mostly a night ride, during which I slept in my seat as much as I could. Although I was eager for the new experience, as I got nearly a thousand miles from home I began to wonder if I would ever get back. I had never been more than fifty miles from home before.

When I arrived at the Bible Institute, I looked forward to a hearty welcome, such as the spirit of Moody would lead one to expect, but the mere routine enrollment and assignment to a room and classes was somewhat disappointing. However, the practical training in the Pacific Garden Mission, where Billy Sunday had been converted, and the street meetings were interesting and helpful. We went into the slums and saloon districts, where songs were sung and short sermons or messages were delivered. The members of a gospel team would then engage the listeners in personal conversation, inviting and urging them to become Christians. Questions were answered, and free booklets and tracts distributed. Stress was always laid on the teachings of the Bible. We all believed that "The word is the sword of the Spirit," and this conviction brought repentance to many.

In missions like the Pacific Garden, sermons and testimonials were delivered by carefully chosen speakers, after

which the procedure was very much like that of the street meetings. I recall talking to a young man who evidently had never had much religious training or opportunity to know the Bible. When I read him the words from Saint John: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name," he eagerly took the little book in his hands so that he could read the verse for himself.



I shall never forget an evening when I was assigned to keep the boys quiet outside a mission for children. I had just told a bear story when the leader of the meeting asked me to come inside and "say a few words." To our surprise, the boisterous boys all followed me into the building, and sat perfectly still while I spoke to them. The only disturbance occurred when a woman who had been standing on the sidewalk suddenly came into the room, fell on her knees, and confessed her sins. As proof

of her conversion, she left with us a bottle which she had evidently intended to take to a saloon for a refill.

During my sojourn in Chicago I paid a visit to Zion City, which had been made famous by the preaching and praying of Alexander Dowie. I remember that there was a sign on the outskirts of the town forbidding smoking. I was especially interested in seeing the large tabernacle where the crowds came to seek healing. Behind the platform I saw crutches, braces, and body supports, once worn by cripples but now discarded, bearing testimony to the miracles claimed to have been performed. I also saw a box of Smith Brothers' Cough Drops solidly nailed to the wall.

Since I was interested in learning how to preach good sermons, I attended various churches, and on one Sunday it was my privilege to worship at a church where Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus, a distinguished pulpit orator and writer was preaching. He took for his theme the verse in St. John: "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden." We were reminded of the lessons from seeds and growing things, a timely thought for it was then the Easter season. It was suggested that everyone should have a garden, even if only six inches square. Mr. Gunsaulus advised us to consider the lilies and trees more carefully, but he rebuked people who drove rapidly through the country and thought that they were "communing with nature." He asked, referring to the high speed of travel, "What would you think of a young man who claimed to be courting a lady at the rate of thirty miles an hour?"

As I see it now, it was not the plan of Providence for

me to remain at the Moody Bible Institute. I was a country-bred boy, and did not like the congestion and smoke of Chicago. My happiest moments were when I could leave the turbulent city and go to Lincoln Park, where I could study in the open air and occasionally watch the antics of sea lions and polar bears. Possibly I was merely homesick, but eventually a foolish fear caused me to decide to leave Chicago. It was the practice of Dr. Towner, the teacher of music, to pick students at random and send them up on the platform to lead the class in singing. If a student protested that he was not musical, Dr. Towner would maintain that this made the exercise all the more fun. I was well aware of my musical disability, and the very idea of this form of merriment was too great a misery for me. My first thought was to avoid the danger of wrecking all tuneful harmony, and my own nervous system as well. So although I had enrolled at the school for the spring term, I cancelled my registration and left before it was half-finished. Some of the spirit of the school remained with me, however, and for that I am grateful.

On my last day in Chicago I visited Montgomery and Ward's big store and bought a small revolver which I thought might be of use in killing bears. I went to the top of the observation tower to feel the strong wind and to get a last look at the city of which I really knew so little. The following day I took my departure.

After a boat ride through Lake Erie and a stopover at Niagara Falls, I went by train to Albany and north to Glens Falls. It was a great joy to see Mother again, and the good brothers and sisters who had found steady em-

ployment in this beautiful city on the Hudson. But after a few days, knowing that Father would be expecting me at Brant Lake, I fastened a few necessities to my bicycle and pedaled over the dusty road toward the scenes of my boyhood.

A SORROW

FATHER and I were the only ones at the little farm that spring. He had been unable to sell the place, but was still hopeful that we would eventually get a fair price. Although we missed the bustle around the house of earlier days, it was good for the two of us to be together. We enjoyed watching the new beauty of spring come to the valley, and we were easy companions, both at work and when we relaxed.

When the trout fishing season opened on May 1, we decided to try our luck in a brushy brook called Desolate. It was a warm sunny day, and anglers' luck was with me, for I caught the largest fish, a beauty weighing well over a pound. However, Father soon took the lead and caught the most fish. As we were returning home with our catch, and had reached the very place where I had prayed so fervently when Mother was ill, a neighbor came along the

road to meet us. He brought the sad news that Mother was dead.

Some people might call it mere coincidence that this communication was given us at this particular bend of the road, but to me it seemed as though an unseen force was saying, "Seven years ago, when you prayed here, your prayer was heard and answered. Now your mother's work is done, and she has gone to the Better Land."

When Father and I reached Glens Falls we learned that on her last day, toward evening, Mother had asked one of my sisters to go to the post office to get my weekly letter, which she always eagerly awaited. But the post office was closed, so she said, "I'll get it in the morning." That night she died quietly in her sleep.

After the funeral, Father and I went back to the little weather-beaten house where Mother had come as a young bride forty-three years before. As I looked around me, I found it almost impossible to adjust to the thought that she had gone forever from this earth. It did not seem reasonable that the house in which she had lived, the roses which she had set out by the stone wall in the front yard, and the clump of lilacs up on the hill should outlast the one who had cared for them for so many years. Even the ledge of rocks, the large trees and the surrounding mountains seemed to taunt me with the truth that they were more enduring than the one who had loved us so tenderly and faithfully.

Of course, I remembered the divine promise about the spirit that goes to God, but my faith was put to a severe test. Did I really believe what I hoped for, and what I professed to believe? In the darkness of the night

I would sometimes awake from sleep with a fear that death might be like an endless night and that the survival of my mother's soul somewhere in the universe was a theory too good to be true. I would be so depressed that I could not lie in bed, but presently I found relief for my troubled mind. As I went to the window and looked up at the stars, their shining splendor seemed to assure me that I had all the reason in the world for believing in immortality. They gave me the same confident answer each time.

When I was a very small boy the stars had fascinated me. They did not seem to be so very far up in the sky, but only just above the roof of our house. One evening when they were shining brightly I went out back of the shed, took down Father's long ash fishpole, and attempted to knock down a few stars. Now, twenty years later, the same kindly stars beamed down on me, and I was glad that I had not disturbed them from their moorings.

A CERTAIN DANGER

*I*N OUR common sorrow, Father and I found comfort in the words of the Great Book. Like a faithful priest in his own home, Father never failed to read a full chapter from the Bible every morning, and another in the evening. There were other activities, too, which helped to heal us. We fished, set and tended bear traps, and found a bee tree with good honey in it.

Since the season for bear trapping was drawing to a close, and the bears had somehow avoided being caught, Father went off early one afternoon to spring his trap. When he had not returned for the trout supper that I had prepared, nor at nine o'clock when the overcast sky turned to intense darkness, I began to worry. I knew that Father

had a way of reading the contours of the mountains and the familiar ground over which he had traveled so many times; but I recalled the stories of his narrow escapes from wounded bears, and knew also that he was no longer as agile as he had been, and that he was alone. It was so dark that I could not see even the dusty gray road which wound close to the house. Time and again I opened the front door so that light from our dim kerosene lamp might guide him. Under such circumstances time moved slowly, but at about eleven o'clock the sound of Father's footsteps put an end to my fears. His exultant voice greeted me with the words, "I've got one."

The prize was a large female bear which he had found dead in his trap, apparently killed by another animal. Father had flayed the bear, folded the pelt to his shoulders, and started back without incident toward the mountain pass and home. Now as he told me the story, Father realized that he had left his pistol behind him on a log near the trap. It was not until the next day, when he went back for the pistol and to reset his trap, that he realized the experience of the day before could have ended quite differently for him.

Large tracks near the trap and through the mountain pass indicated that Father had been watched and followed. Evidently the huge mate had paced angrily back and forth out of sight while Father was busily engaged in skinning the pelt from the dead bear. While black bears are generally afraid of human beings, and are quick to run off at the sound of a hunter's footsteps, this big male apparently was not inclined to flee. Perhaps an instinctive loyalty to his mate kept him near, even though he did not

have the courage to defend her. Some trappers have reported hearing a bear sob, much like a person; and Father often said that one bear which he had shot made a noise that sounded like "Oh, dear." But in our valley there was not much sentiment for bears that killed our sheep in the darkness, and certainly not a great deal of sympathy for



an old male who pretended affection for his mate at one period of the year, only to kill her cubs later on.

It seemed as though this cautious male must have followed Father's burdened figure for quite some distance, but had never found the right moment for attack. Father later learned from some vacationers that the fearful noises of some animal had kept them awake all night. In fact, a

lady from the city was so frightened by the dreadful sounds that she lost no time in leaving the cottage where she was being entertained. She was sure that the mountains were haunted.

CONFUSIONS AND CONVICTIONS: WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, 1906

UNTIL this time I had no conception of what a college was like. As I have mentioned, no one from our section of the Adirondacks had ventured forth even for a highschool education, to say nothing of going to college. However, the urge to seek higher education had been growing stronger and stronger within me, and I was fortunate in receiving enthusiastic support from two clergymen, George C. Douglass and C. O. Judkins. When I mentioned to George Douglass that the financial problems seemed almost insurmountable, he told me how he had worked his way through college. He said also that his financial resources had been so limited that once when he received a letter from his mother warning him to watch out for pickpockets, he had had to borrow a postage

stamp to mail his reply. C. O. Judkins, the builder of a splendid church in Glens Falls, gave me further reassurance, and even suggested two people who might be willing to lend me money for college expenses. Greatly encouraged by the advice of these two men, I decided upon Wesleyan University, in Middletown, Connecticut, reasoning in my heart that the best way to accomplish anything worthwhile is to begin doing something about it.

In September of 1906, with less than one hundred dollars in my pocket, I started for Wesleyan. Since I had had four years of Latin and three of Greek, plus a diploma from the Glens Falls Academy and another from the Regents of New York State, I was accepted as a student without examination. This was fortunate for me, for I was a rather slow learner and because of my ministerial work had never had enough time to get my translations of Caesar, Cicero, Virgil, Xenophon and Homer in accurate classical form. I felt rather shaky in these subjects and could sympathize with the student who, having heard that pure Attic Greek might be the language of heaven, wrote the lines:

What to me will heaven be? What its joy?
If I should flunk in Attic when a boy?

As matters turned out, I never failed to pass the periodic tests in both Latin and Greek, but it must have been evident to my instructors that I was not a star of the first magnitude in linguistics. An English professor of mine, after saying some encouraging things about one of my compositions, once remarked, "By the way, Mr. Roberts, some people spell differently from you." My Greek

and Latin professors at Wesleyan, when they saw my handling of tenses, datives, and accusatives in these highly developed languages, might have been provoked to a similar criticism. I was aware, however, that my failings were not due entirely to stupidity, but were partly the fault of a system of education that did not take into consideration the unfortunate fact that self-supporting students often have little time for their studies.

During my senior year, when I had more hours for study, I took Hebrew. I began by learning the alphabet forward and backward, and pursued vocabulary and grammar with the same thoroughness. As a result, my midyear mark in that subject was 99%. Doubtless I spelled some word a little differently.

Considering the way in which I had been brought up on the Bible it will not seem strange when I say that I experienced my greatest mental upheaval at Wesleyan in the realm of faith, especially when I began to study the subjects of biology and evolution. While the assignment of dissecting a tail-less frog for the sake of science sheds some light on why we think of these jumpers as "brother frogs," I was not fascinated with the theory which purported that amoeba begat tadpole, which begat monkey, which begat anthropoid ape, which begat missing-link, which begat man. I had always been led to believe that God had made all things very much as they now appear, and that he had done so in a relatively short period of time. Fortunately for me, the distinguished Professor Conn, under whom I studied biology and evolution, was a devout and religious man. He held thoroughly to the evolutionary process of creation, but he also believed

that this apparently slow and gradual method of natural selection was God's way of working. It was reassuring to know that a great scholar did not try to eliminate God from the universe but, rather, saw Him working in it and through it at all times.

Our instructors were men of deep learning, always patient and inspiring, but also gifted with keen humor. Once when Professor Conn was asked at the bank whether he would like his money in new bills, the authority on germs replied, "I am not afraid of old money—bacteria can't live on my salary."

This same professor also revealed to us that one of the most logical places to dig for earthworms is in a spinster's garden, for birds devour worms, cats scare the birds away, and old maids generally keep cats. At the same time my study of biology taught me to realize the worth of angleworms as soil-builders. I had known from experience their value in catching fish, but I learned that from sand and decaying vegetable matter these underground workers make humus, so essential for growing prize crops.

Because we were eager to solve the baffling problems of philosophy and religion, a group of students, including myself, formed what we called a Quest Club. We met regularly to discuss such questions as the Idea of the Trinity, the Resurrection, and the cussedness of Evil. The heads of the various departments at Wesleyan often gave short talks at these meetings.

Caleb T. Winchester, our teacher of literature, suggested that we read Dr. Eleanor Rowland's *The Right to Believe*. I followed the recommendation, and was richly rewarded. Dr. Rowland contends that if we want a God, we

have as much right to believe in Him as others have to take sides with the "no-God." People who think it is more intellectual to doubt God's reality are like a man who leans over backward in an effort to stand up straight.

As a further bulwark, I recalled the teachings of the Bible, and was able to rise above all dark dreams of doubt. The Book of my parents, the starry sky above, and the joy of Christian experience all seemed to bear witness to the virtue of faith. So it was that instead of losing my faith as a result of my courses in science and philosophy, my convictions concerning the great teachings of Christianity became more firmly grounded than ever before. In short, my feelings toward those who spoke against the Bible were similar to those of Mark Twain when he was asked to buy a ticket to hear Robert Ingersoll lecture on "Some Mistakes of Moses." The noted humorist said that he wouldn't pay ten cents to hear Ingersoll lecture on the mistakes of Moses, but he would be willing to pay ten dollars to hear Moses lecture on the mistakes of Bob Ingersoll.

At the same time that I was broadening my horizons through the meetings of the Quest Club, I was also gaining valuable practical experience by earning money to help pay college bills. A sales manager for a publishing company trained me to go from house to house selling books. The effort was glamorized as a part of The Purity Movement, and great pains were taken to show me the best way to get a hearing. When housewives saw my sample book and assumed a negative attitude, I was to create a friendly atmosphere by explaining that I wished to talk

to them about the Self and Sex Crusade. Not surprisingly, doors were opened wide when I used this approach, and I was rewarded with many sales of *What Young People, Married Couples, and Older Folks Ought to Know*.

HEARTS AND PRIZES

AT THE end of my freshman year in college, I was given a summer appointment to preach in a little church back in the foothills of the Adirondacks. I boarded at a hotel which gave me low rates, with the understanding that I was to help make the social life of the guests, most of whom were women, as pleasant as possible. In this rather agreeable assignment I had an opportunity to fill in some gaps in my education. I discovered that it would require the wisdom of a Solomon and the diplomacy of a Benjamin Franklin to divide my attention among the ladies successfully, so that no one would feel slighted. The problem became more involved when an extremely attractive young lady came to spend her vacation at the cottage next to mine. She had a new canoe, and needed a man to help her paddle it and to show her how to fish. Her uncle, who brought her to the hotel, had confided to me that if any man hoped to suc-

ceed in winning his niece, he would have to go after her like "a thousand of brick." With three years more of college ahead of me, and with other considerations that tended to make me cautious, I hardly felt like going after anyone in the overwhelming manner that "a thousand of brick" might imply, but I did like to go canoeing with this particular girl, whose name was Laura.

Our acquaintance was progressing very well when Laura decided to spend a fortnight with her father. On the very day that she left the hotel, three nurses arrived at the lake for their vacation. One of them, a pretty blonde named Ruth, was upset because her trunk had been left behind at the station, some twelve miles away. Obviously, it fell to me to pacify the young lady. I suggested that the three girls take a boatripe with me and forget the delayed baggage until the stage could bring it the next day. The plan worked perfectly, and everybody seemed happy. Ruth was so pleased with the boatripe that she wanted to go with me again and learn how to catch pickerel, which we did the next day. When we returned for dinner some of the guests, in a fun-loving mood, greeted us with rice and old shoes.

We laughed at this prank, but a few days later my name was again linked with that of the blonde nurse. A number of the younger people were gathering to go to a country dance, and I moved about among them, saying pleasant things and attempting to be social, just as I was expected to be. When I happened to say to Ruth, "Be sure to come home early," she replied, "I will, if you'll come after me." I pretended to play her game and offered to meet her, but named such an early hour that I felt sure

she would back down. However, to my surprise, she agreed. As I tried to crawl out of a situation which I feared might lead to another reception with rice, she smiled and said, "Are you a quitter?" So of course I met her and brought her safely back to the hotel. Someone saw us together when we returned, and since topics of conversation are limited at such a resort, this bit of gossip was soon passed along.

Meanwhile, I had received a letter from Laura saying that she and her father were on an estate where she had a boat and an entire lake to herself. She called attention to the stunning moon, and asked, "What is the good of it all without a man to row me?"

By the time Laura returned to the lake Ruth had left, and I was sure that all the excitement about our fancied romance had died down. I was entirely mistaken. Laura's first question was about my doings while she was away. She listened to my rather lengthy effort to explain away the gossip she had heard, and then fixing me with a glance of final judgment said, "Mr. Roberts, you have certainly learned the game."

Dejected by such an appraisal, but not entirely without hope, I recalled the lines: "There is something about a woman I could never understand, And my knowledge goes as far as any scholar's in the land." I must admit, though, that if I had any conceit about my wisdom concerning feminine matters, I lost it at that time.

The shy country boy who had been called a "quitter" by one girl and a wolf who had "learned the game" by another got safely back to college in September. My

sophomore year proved to be a good one. With Greek, Latin, mathematics, physics, and chemistry no longer required, I was able to turn to literature, psychology, philosophy, and public-speaking, which I felt had more bearing on my chosen career. I became a member of the Sophomore debating team, which defeated the Freshmen, and so was encouraged to enter the trials for the Inter-collegiate contest, but the upperclassmen were too experienced for me.

Each year the college held a prize debate for all classes, and I managed to secure third place on one of the teams. Because of the reputation of the juniors and seniors, I worked hard and was able to carry off half the prize. A junior took the other half, while the over-confident seniors were disappointed.

A little later in the year, I was selected as one of the competitors in the Annual Oratorical Contest. Since I had had an impediment in my speech in grade-school days, I applied myself to acquiring a better speaking voice, and zealously practiced such exercises as "She sells sea shells," "A big black bug bit a big black bear," and that other tongue-twister which goes as follows: "If Theophilus Thistle, the successful thistle-sifter, in sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb, see that thou, in sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles, thrust not three thousand thistles through the thick of thy thumb. Success to the successful thistle-sifter."

This last must have done the trick, for while I was training for the big elocutionary event our instructor noticed my improvement and remarked, "Mr. Roberts, while

you speak more rapidly than the other men do, your words are so distinct that you do not need to slow down." In any event, diligence was the mother of good luck, and my efforts were rewarded with the fifty-dollar first prize.



Needless to say, when Father heard of my success in oratory, he was more elated than he would have been if he had just caught the largest sheep-killing bear in the Adirondacks.

THE BEST PRIZE OF ALL

A S GOOD as it was to win a couple of prizes, this same year held even better things in store for me. A church in nearby Wethersfield, Connecticut, which had been served by a senior, was soon to have a vacancy. I became a candidate for the position, and was fortunate enough to be selected. Beginning in April, I had to prepare two sermons a week, but the church was only ten miles from Wesleyan and I could easily travel back and forth by trolley. The weekly addition to my income was a great boon, and well worth the extra effort.

At the very beginning of my ministerial activities a reception was held to say farewell to the young pastor who was leaving the church and to welcome me as his successor. I saw among the guests a young lady whom I hoped I would see again, and later in the evening my predecessor introduced us. He told me that she was a member of another church and came to this one only in

the evening, when her own church did not have services. However, she frequently sang in our choir and sometimes substituted as organist. My friend praised her character and charm and mentioned that if he had not already been committed to a young lady, he would have chosen this one.

Her name was Jeanie Holmes, and she was twenty-three years old. I learned that she was a teacher in a local school. Previously, when she was only twenty, she had undertaken the difficult task of instructing and disciplining some fifty County Home pupils, most of them underprivileged children from disrupted families. She had taught all grades. On the opening day of school the superintendent had presented her with a whip and had explained that she was not to count on him for any assistance in governing the ill-mannered students, some of whom were taller and bigger than their teacher. He added, "If you can't handle them, I'll get someone who can." A less resolute person might have lost heart but Jeanie, who was a doughty Scot, replied, "Don't worry, I'll never call on you."

In a short time the boys and girls in Jeanie's school became as orderly as a company of soldiers. She had to use the whip at first on some of the larger boys, but firmness coupled with kindness soon won their respect. During recesses she played games with them in the yard, and she taught them to sing. Many visitors came to hear the singing, and farmers made it a habit to rest their horses outside the school building and listen.

I was able to see Jeanie Holmes again after our first meeting, even sooner than I had hoped. It was the custom

for the members of my church to billet the young ministers in various homes from Saturday to Monday. On one weekend, when it was not convenient for a certain couple to take me into their house, the Holmes house was suggested. Even though they were not affiliated with our church, their hospitality was well known. After that first pleasant weekend with the Holmes family, it was some-



thing more than appreciation and pastoral interest which led me back to see them quite frequently.

As our friendship deepened I was able to conquer some of my former shyness with the ladies. I offered Jean the gold medal which had been awarded me for being on the college debating team, and she consented to wear it on a chain about her neck. Our courtship continued, and the anticipation of seeing Jean every weekend added greatly to my enthusiasm for traveling back and forth to Wethersfield to minister to the little Methodist church

there. Jeanie also visited me at Wesleyan. When I first invited her for a Commons Club party, an elderly lady whom I knew offered to let Jean stay at her home during the weekend festivities. Along with the offer of hospitality, my elderly friend cautioned me against losing my heart to the first girl I invited to a college party. A few days later, after she had met Jeanie, my friend had quite different advice. She said, "Mr. Roberts, if you ever get a chance to marry Jeanie Holmes, and don't do it, I'll lose all my respect for you." These were, as a matter of fact, exactly my own sentiments.

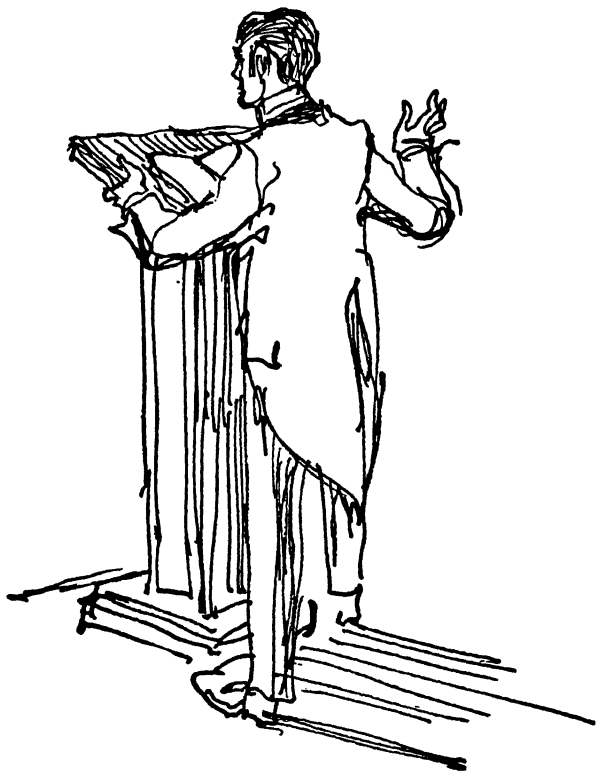
However, as so often happens, when we would like to go up and possess the Promised Land at once, obstacles like the Walls of Jericho block our way. In my case, I had two more years of college to finish, and after that there was an obligation to my unmarried sisters who had provided a home for me in Glens Falls. To make matters more difficult, during the second semester of my senior year I had a severe attack of blood poisoning and was confined to the hospital for ten weeks. A cheering note during this period was provided by my Chemistry professor, who visited me and made the undoubtedly true prediction: "You will feel a lot better when you get over it." Gradually my health improved so that I was able to study in bed, and since a member of my class let me copy his notes from the lectures, I passed my final examination and graduated with better than average grades.

MY FIRST FULL-TIME CHURCH

AFTER graduation I applied for a church and full-time pastoral work. Returning to Troy Conference, where I had the credentials of a Local Preacher, I was sent to a tiny Methodist church at Berlin, New York, a place strategically situated, as I thought, between Jeanie in Connecticut, my sisters at Glens Falls and Father at Brant Lake.

As a lover of mountains, I was delighted to be among the Berkshires where the white birch trees grow on the higher slopes and large fields of gladioli beautify the valley. More than this, though, I was eager for the challenge of Christian service, and hopeful that in due time I might bring Jean to the parsonage as my wife. The salary was six hundred dollars a year—not a very large amount for clothing, food, fuel, books, and the repayment of a college loan. The parsonage was provided, however, and I had a place to keep thirty hens, so had eggs to eat, to trade for groceries, and to share with others. And the people of

Berlin responded to my efforts in increasing numbers. Not only did the stalwart saints take on a more hopeful spirit, but also many people who had not been in the habit of church attendance began to come.



Following my previous experience, I went after some of the "lost sheep." Although our town had voted against selling intoxicating drink, there was a house across the valley called "The Crow's Nest," where liquor was illegally sold. Attempts had been made to secure evidence of the sale of liquor, but so far it had been impossible to

obtain the necessary proof. In addition, there was a rumor in the community that any stranger who might be caught spying around "The Crow's Nest" would be met with hot lead.

I learned that a woman was in charge of "The Crow's Nest" and that her husband was ill. Believing that I might turn man's extremity into God's opportunity, I decided to include this house among my sick calls, and chose an early afternoon for my visit.

It was with some apprehension that I walked up the hill to "The Crow's Nest" and knocked. Almost immediately the door opened, revealing a woman with such stringy, unkempt hair that she reminded me of Medusa, whose fearful countenance turned men to stone. Introducing myself as the new minister, I explained that I had heard of her husband's illness and had come to ask if there was any way I could help.

Suddenly the hard, scowling face became wet with tears. "You are the first decent person to come to my house in years," she said.

From his bed in an adjoining room, the husband called out to me, and as I talked to him it was clear that sickness and unemployment had been instrumental in leading these two into their illegal dealings. Both husband and wife seemed ready to lead better lives—and from then on they really did. While the man remained an invalid and so could not take a job, his wife secured employment in a shirt factory, and began to attend church. For a young minister it had been a good day's work to accomplish what was done—without law and without trouble—and I felt that the experience had clearly demonstrated the saying,

"Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence or learning."

Over the years I had become increasingly concerned about Father who, though over eighty, clung to the farm which had been his earthly home for more than half a century. Sisters Clara and Antha took turns keeping house for him, and he frequently visited his eldest daughter, Alice, whose home was only a few miles from Brant Lake. During part of my first winter in Berlin he came to



be with me; but as spring approached, he responded to the call of the Brant Lake country where he could gather sweet sap from his maples and do some late-season trapping and fishing.

At times brother Ruel, who followed in Father's footsteps as a hunter, spent long periods with him during which they hunted along the familiar trails. Later on Ruel joined the Marines and was sent to the Canal Zone, where he found excitement now and then in connection with the capture of wild animals. On one occasion he tracked down and killed two pumas which were preying on small

goats and cattle, and another time he captured two bear cubs which became company mascots and were named for Theodore Roosevelt and his daughter Alice, who were inspecting the Canal at that time.

After his return to the States, Ruel settled in Glens Falls, bought some swampy land which no one else wanted, cut out the alders, and made the land into a fertile garden. Having discovered that the wetness of the ground was caused by a cool spring of water which came from under a high bank, he dug ditches and a series of pools in which he raised a surprisingly large number of trout. And since he was so near to Lake George and other bodies of water, he furnished bait for fishermen.

In time of drouth, when other gardens suffered for the lack of moisture, Ruel had prize crops of radishes, lettuce, parsley, carrots, and corn. He sold fresh vegetables to the markets, and people who came for fish bait often bought the vegetables right from the garden.

When the gardening season was over, Ruel turned to hunting and trapping. He drove a Ford car, and was able to spread his traps over a wide area, adding many hundreds of dollars to his yearly income. As a guide for deer-hunting, he was also in great demand.

Ruel did not attempt to trap bears, but he did track down and kill a sixty-nine pound lynx which had frightened some hunters out of the woods. Best of all, he became enthusiastic about the conservation of wild life, and wrote articles on ways and means for preserving our fish and game.

It was natural for members of the family to move to Glens Falls, our nearest city, for there were more oppor-

tunities for year-round work there. My brother John became a carpenter and builder, married and had a family who often visited Father at Brant Lake, but no one could persuade Father to move from his stronghold among the hills before it could be sold.

HONEYMOON AT PHARAOH LAKE

*M*EANTIME, all was going well with my little church, and in May of 1910 I was successful in persuading Jeanie Holmes to become my wife. We were married in a double-ring ceremony at Wethersfield, and I added force to the vow "And with my worldly goods I thee endow" by giving her twenty-five gold pieces as a wedding gift.

On my small salary it was not possible to plan the traditional wedding trip to Niagara Falls, but I thought I knew of an even better place for a honeymoon. So after a few weeks at Berlin, Jeanie and I headed north toward Glens Falls, Brant Lake, and Pharaoh Lake. We were to spend a few days with Father at the old farm, and I had engaged my convert and friend, Bill Bentley, to meet our boat at Hague, on Lake George, and to convey us by horse and wagon over the ten miles of mountain road to Brant Lake. Bill was not only prompt and accommodating,

but also displayed no trace of his former rough talk. When he had got us safely over the winding, bumpy road, and had had a chance to size up my attractive bride, he extended his welcome by saying, "When you git time, come down to see us, and bring your worman with you."

For several days we lived in a small umbrella-tent on the old farm, where sister Clara was keeping house for Father. Then, with Clara, my nephew Frank Schneider, and his sister Josephine, we set out over the road to Pharaoh Lake. Burdened as we were with supplies, the journey seemed longer than the five miles from Warren County over into Essex, but we finally reached the Lake and rowed to Little Island, where we set up our tent.

This particular camping site was a favorite of mine, for it was partially shaded by a dozen pine and cedar trees, and afforded a splendid view of the lake and the encircling mountains. Situated as it is on state land, with free camping privileges, I often spoke of the place as our million-dollar estate. For a young bride who had never experienced roughing it, the strenuous hike into the rugged, mountainous park, and the hard mattress of solid earth for her bed provided Jeanie with a fitting initiation into the Roberts family. Moreover, the weather for the first night of our camping trip was far from cooperative. As if conspiring against us, the heavens let loose torrents of rain. The wind blew the humid sprays through the tent flap, soaking Jeanie's feet, and rivulets pouring down the sides of the canvas formed pools under us.

The next night we camped on an island with better drainage facilities, and found for our inexperienced camper a bed of boughs and moss which a former camper

must have carefully made to provide some measure of comfort. These sleeping quarters only made matters worse, however, for the bed proved to be infested with lice, which quickly found a new habitation in Jeanie's dark brown hair. With such an initiation, one would not have blamed her for never wanting to see the woods again. But Jeanie learned to fish so well that she sometimes caught more than anyone else, and eventually became as eager as I was to turn back to the wildwood every summer.

There is an old rhyme that goes:

When the wind is in the east
It's good for neither man nor beast;
When it's in the south,
It blows the hook into the fish's mouth;
But when it is in the west,
It is at its best.

How true this poem is I do not know, but I do know that in order to be successful one must fish in the right places, at the right depth, at the right speed, with the right lure, at the right time of day, and with the right muscular reaction. People who are slow in learning the fine arts of angling spend a vacation at Pharaoh Lake and go away believing that there are no trout to be caught. I remember a Labor Day afternoon when my wife and I had just landed a speckled beauty and some fishermen with flashing rods came by and called out: "That must be the last one in the lake." Since we had been out from early morning, and since we were not at that time limited as to number of fish by law, we were able to

reply: "That's all right, we've brought in twenty others today."

Even now this secluded place has not been overtaken by the inroads of civilization, and the trout have not been all caught out. Larger lake trout are caught in Lake George, but the Pharaoh trout are of superior quality.

Meantime, without consulting me—or anyone else in the family—and evidently thinking that my college education and ministerial experience qualified me to handle real estate on earth as well as to preach about it in heaven, Father had deeded the farm to me. Soon a letter came to me, asking what I would take for this property. Because I cherished a desire to keep the weather-worn house and surrounding woodland for a summer camp, at least so long as Father might live, I set the selling figure at five thousand dollars. By return mail a check came to bind the bargain. Five thousand dollars seemed like a lot of money for the buildings and rocky land, and some of our neighbors thought I had asked too much, but eventually the other farms sold for good prices too. Thus our precedent proved to be of benefit to all inhabitants of the valley.

The sale of the farm enabled another wish of mine to come true, for, with Father's ready consent, part of the money was given to my brother John, so that he could build a house in Glens Falls where my unmarried sisters could live and make a home for Father during his remaining days.

For Father, who had loved to walk in the forest and among the hills, life in the city was not ideal, but there were compensations. Seven of his children, and a number of grandchildren, now resided in Glens Falls. Even though his trapping days were ended, he still had the pleasure of reading the Bible and of telling stories to attentive young listeners. One little girl, the daughter of a neighbor, told her parents enthusiastically that she had met a fine old man with a long white beard. "He told us chil-

dren how the bears live way up back of the mountains, and he talked to us about the Bible and the love of God."

I was very grateful for the way everything had turned out for my family, and for the part that I had been able to take in helping them. However, we were soon to face another sadness.

Only a few months after Father had put his Bible,



pistol, and clothes in a bundle and slowly walked away from his Brant Lake farm, I received a telegram that he had suffered a serious stroke. When I reached Glens Falls I found him partially paralyzed, but his mind was clear and his voice unaffected. As he saw me enter his room, he said:

"Well, Jesse, I'm going home. I know it, and I have known it for a long time." He told me he was happy and

asked me to read to him from his Bible. I opened to some of the passages which he especially liked, and read:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters,
He restoreth my soul.

and

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,
and they follow me: and I give unto them
eternal life; and they shall never perish.

Proving that the same words which had sustained him throughout his life gave strength in the valley of the shadow of death, Father responded with a fervent "Amen."

Ten days later, realizing that he was steadily growing weaker, Father expressed a desire to have strong hands hold his own. One son took his right hand, another his left. After a few moments of tenseness as if, like Samson of old, he was tearing up the bonds of earth that imprisoned him, Father relaxed and his spirit returned to Him who gave it.

Later, as all nine of us children gathered in the cemetery, we could see the Adirondacks to the north, and, across the plain, the Green Mountains from which Father had come over a half-century before. We listened to the comforting words of St. Paul which Father had read to us so many times, and which he had requested for this service.

For I am persuaded, that neither death,
nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,
nor powers, nor things present, nor things to
come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other
creature, shall be able to separate us from
the love of God. . . .

As I finish this book, I have a letter from a friend at Brant Lake saying that the leaves of the trees up around my boyhood home are more beautiful this year than ever. Perhaps this is because the place is being written about, and is smiling in the pleasure of being introduced to the public. I can see it all vividly through the eyes of my memory, though there is present also a lonesome feeling,



because my people are not there, nor even the house which was once so full of life.

Still, as good deeds never die, so do kind souls live on beyond their graves, continuing to bless all who knew them. Grateful to the God-loving parents who, through the power of the Book they read in the back country, bequeathed to their children a rich heritage of faith, hope, and courage, I dedicate what I have written to the memory of Ann Eliza and Edwin Roberts, my mother and my father.



(Continued from front flap)

and patience of his parents, and the words of wisdom which encouraged him to seek a higher education and devote his adult life to the ministry.

When he finished this book, Mr. Roberts wrote: "A friend from Brant Lake has recently said that the leaves of the trees up around my boyhood home are more beautiful this year than ever. Perhaps this is because the place is being written about, and is smiling in the pleasure of being introduced to the public." Readers too will be warmed by the sincerity and natural humor of these affectionate memories. In this troubled time, *Bears, Bibles and a Boy* sounds a refreshing note, and readers of all ages will respond to the words of the author, who has truly found serenity in the love of fellow men, of nature, and of his God.

The Author

Jesse David Roberts was born in 1882 at Brant Lake, Warren County, New York, and grew up among the mountains of the back country. After graduating from Wesleyan University at Middletown, Connecticut, he was pastor of churches at Berlin, New York, and at South Meriden, Hartford, and Milford in Connecticut. While at South Meriden, he took post-graduate work at Wesleyan in social psychology and the philosophy of religion. He has also served for eight years in the Home Study Department of Columbia University.

Bears, Bibles and a Boy is Mr. Roberts' first book, although he has written articles for various church papers. Having retired from the ministry, he now lives with his wife in Milford.

